



## POST 1914 HISTORY



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## PREFACE

**I**N this book an attempt has been made to tell quite simply the story of world affairs from 1914 to 1945. Little has been covered beyond the main concerns of international war and peace. The other contributions of the time, notably in scientific and social progress, all-important though they are, have not been considered. But a boy or girl at school, it is sincerely hoped, reading the book should get some idea of the many problems of this modern world of nations in which we live.

There are two difficulties in such a book. The first arises from the necessity of condensation. The usual polysyllabic jargon of politics and diplomacy has to be avoided. In the effort to write in a language likely to be understood by a fourteen-year-old, desirable precision has to go and essential details to be pruned away. Sometimes a point comes where brevity and simplicity almost pass into falsification. The second difficulty arises from the state of our present knowledge. Even while the book was in proof important items of information, affecting particularly the later pages of the book, were being published, items which it seemed imperative to include. The only course was to fix a dead-line (October 1948) beyond which no further alterations or additions were allowable. Indulgence is begged on both these counts.

It is pleasant to acknowledge help received from Professor Charles A. W. Manning, Dr. Christina Harris, Mr.

Andrew Rice and Miss Agnete Wind; and to these names is added with special gratitude that of Mr. Sydney Walton, who followed the book with so much interest from its inception. All gave generously of time and trouble, and whatever value this little exercise may have, derives in great part from them.

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PART ONE  
THE FIRST WORLD WAR, 1914-1918

CHAPTER 1  
THE OUTBREAK OF THE WAR

THE END OF THE GREAT PEACE

**T**WICE in less than thirty years have quarrels between nations in Europe led to great world wars. Probably the generation from 1914 to 1945 has seen more lives lost and more lands laid waste than any other generation in history. All this happened in a world which seemed so civilised and so full of happy possibilities. How did these things come about? In this little book we shall try to describe some of the events of this extraordinary time.

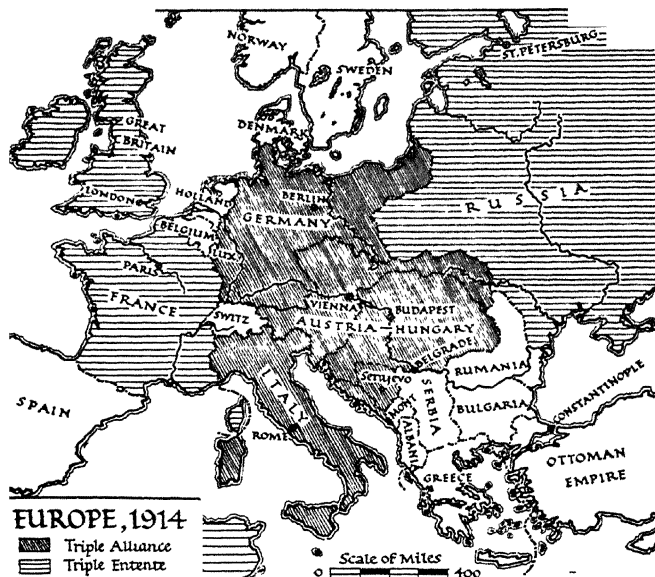
In 1914 the nations had been long at peace, and, in spite of many dangerous signs, great world wars seemed as far away as anyone could then imagine. To be sure there had been smaller wars in recent years. Somebody was always fighting somewhere. Since 1900 Britain had fought a war with the Boers in South Africa, Japan had fought a war with Russia in Manchuria, Italy had fought a war with Turkey in Tripoli, and the little Balkan kingdoms had fought a couple of wars among themselves. But none of these wars compared in size or seriousness with the great war which was

now to break out in Europe. None of them deeply affected our own ways of life in Britain. In those days most of us took peace for granted and believed it would continue for all time.

#### ARMIES AND ARMAMENTS

But terrible events in history, like the First World War, suddenly and unexpectedly though they may appear to come, have in fact a long preparation behind them. We have not the space for that complicated story here. But there were many signs in 1914 that all was not well in Europe and that the long peace, so contentedly and unthinkingly accepted, was really wearing very thin. Old rivalries for colonies and trade were still unsettled. Modern science and industry were still bringing new things into the world—new inventions, new powers, new luxuries—and it was sometimes difficult for old ways of living to keep pace with the many changes. The peasant and worker everywhere were growing more discontented with their lot and were sometimes in an angry, revolutionary mood. Young nations, like Italy and especially Germany, which scarce half a century before had been disunited groups of smaller states, were glorying in their new-won nationhood and striving to expand. Old nations, like Austria-Hungary and Russia, had systems of government that were plainly out of date and long over-due for reform. France had never forgotten her defeat in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871 and Germany's annexation of her old provinces of Alsace-Lorraine at that time.

The nations of Europe were building up great armies, and thereby increasing the very dangers they sought to guard themselves against. For rivalry leads to fear, and



Europe in 1914 was divided into two 'armed camps', on the one side the Triple Alliance of Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy, and on the other side the Triple Entente of France, Russia and Britain.

fear to more rivalry. Most nations had introduced conscription; their budgets showed heavy military expenditures; their industries were busy producing huge quantities of arms. Even navies were in competition. Britain, for example, who depended on her fleet for her very life, was anxiously watching the growing challenge of the German navy.

#### THE GREAT ALLIANCES

Then the nations of Europe were not only building up great armies, but making military alliances with one another,



and so it happened that the alliances gradually fell into two main opposing groups. Thus Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy had formed a Triple Alliance; and France, Russia and Britain had formed a Triple Entente. In consequence, if any two nations went to war, others would immediately be drawn in, and a quarrel anywhere in Europe might mean a general war between the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente. Of course every nation claimed that its alliances were defensive, and some European statesmen believed that rival alliances between groups of nations of nearly equal strength held a sort of balance between them—a balance of power, as it was called—which in itself helped to preserve the peace.

There were several occasions before 1914 when some quarrel—often a very minor quarrel in a very out-of-the-way place—nearly brought all these rivalries, preparations and alliances to breaking-point. For there were ‘crises’ in those days even as there are now. One constant source of alarm was the German Kaiser, William II. He was not the tyrant he has sometimes been made out to be, but he was an excitable, arrogant man. He was fond of wearing glittering uniforms and medals and of being photographed in fierce, striking attitudes. He was also fond of making blood-curdling speeches in public, and more than once he seemed to be threatening war.

#### NATIONALISM

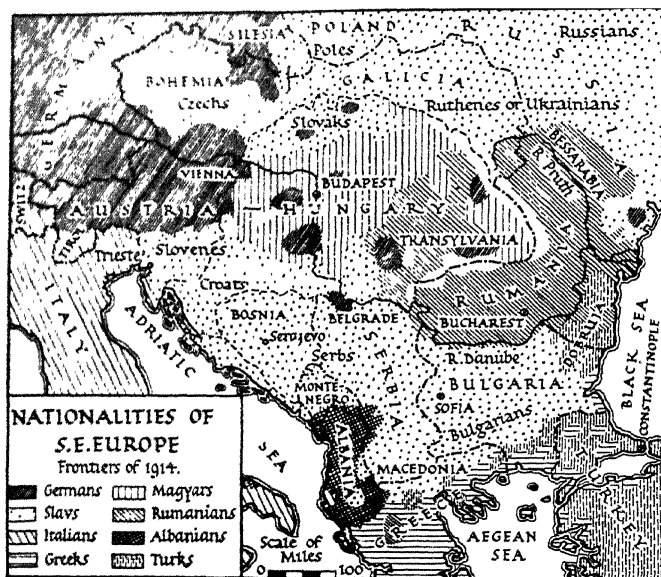
Another sign of the times in Europe was the growth of nationalism. Nationalism is the love of one’s nation, one’s people and country. In many ways it is a fine, admirable thing. But it has also been the cause of bitter enmities.

In Europe in 1914 there were several nationalities who found themselves under the rule of more powerful nations and who were actively striving for their freedom. It is said that one European out of five was then subject to a people who did not speak his language or did not worship as he worshipped.

In one part of Europe especially had nationalism grown very dangerous indeed, and that part was Austria-Hungary. Austria-Hungary has now disappeared from the map, but in 1914 she was a great Empire which included various nationalities—Czechs, Slovaks, Poles, Rumanians, Serbs and Italians. We shall have to say more about these nationalities later in this book; but it will be enough to say here that all of them passionately desired their freedom and were ready to fight for it. Some of them wanted to be joined to brother nations outside Austria-Hungary which were already free. Thus the Serbs in Austria-Hungary looked longingly across the border to their brother Serbs outside Austria-Hungary who only lately had set up their own independent kingdom of Serbia. The Serbs were brave, hardy, adventurous men, and, unhappily for the peace of Europe, some of them were willing to plot and kill to gain their ends.

#### THE ASSASSINATION AT SERAJEVO

Austria-Hungary at this time was ruled by the Emperor Francis Joseph. As his son was dead, his heir was his nephew, the Archduke Francis Ferdinand. On June 28, 1914, the Archduke and his wife were taking part in a ceremonial tour of Serajevo, a picturesque town in the Austrian province of Bosnia largely inhabited by Serbs,



Eastern Europe has always been a tangle of nationalities. As a result of the First World War many of these nationalities were liberated and set up independent states.

and there, as they were driving through the streets in a motor-car, a young Serbian student shot and killed them.

The crime was a horrible one, and at first all the world's sympathies were roused against Serbia. The newspapers everywhere carried banner headlines on 'Serbian barbarism'. The Government of Austria-Hungary, after a few weeks' delay, sent an ultimatum to Serbia demanding that the plotting of Serbs in Serbia with Serbs in Austria-Hungary should be stopped forthwith and that the plotters should be arrested, tried and punished. The ultimatum was written in the harshest terms—so harsh that it looked as if

Austria-Hungary had determined not only to be revenged for the actual crime at Serajevo, but to reduce Serbia herself to a vassal State. Much of the feeling which had been roused against Serbia was now turned against Austria-Hungary. In particular the Russians, who regarded the Serbs as of the same race as themselves and had always lent them a protecting hand, began to protest against the brutal course of action which Austria-Hungary was taking.

Here, then, was exactly one of those dangerous occasions which might start a general war. If Austria-Hungary and Russia fought over Serbia, it was more than likely that Austria-Hungary's allies would feel it necessary to support Austria-Hungary, and Russia's allies to support Russia, and then the Triple Alliance would soon be at war with the Triple Entente. Because of an ugly crime in a remote little town in a remote corner of Austria, millions of men would clash upon the battlefield.

#### ELEVEN NATIONS GO TO WAR

It is very difficult to lay the exact blame for what happened. All through July, 1914, the Governments of Europe were feverishly sending each other notes and telegrams trying to settle the Serbian quarrel. Germany cannot be wholly blamed for the war, but she did very little to prevent it. She encouraged Austria-Hungary to deal harshly with Serbia, and her excitable, arrogant Kaiser was the last man to show caution at such a moment. The British Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, proposed to hold a conference of all the nations concerned, but Germany would not accept his invitation. On July 28, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia, and early the next day



WILLIAM II, the German Kaiser,  
1888-1918.

Austrian guns shelled the Serbian capital, Belgrade. Russia immediately began to mobilise her army against Austria-Hungary; Germany declared war on Russia and then on Russia's ally, France. The First World War had begun.

Italy, always very much concerned with any events that disturbed the peace of her near neighbours in the Balkans, deeply resented Austria's aggression there, especially as Austria, her supposed ally, had now acted without fully consulting her. The Serbian quarrel, said Italy therefore, was none of her making, and, though she was one of the nations of the Triple Alliance, she declared her neutrality.

It is possible that Britain, like Italy, also might have stood aside, had it not been for Germany's invasion of Belgium. Belgium at this time was a country which Germany, France and Britain had agreed by solemn treaty never to invade. Britain had always felt safer with an independent, friendly Belgium facing her across the narrow part of the North Sea. But Germany was now at war with France, and again and again through history Belgium has been the high road for the would-be conquerors of France. The German Chancellor described the solemn treaty as 'a scrap of paper'. On August 2, 1914, an indignant, angry Britain woke to the news that German forces had crossed the Belgian frontier. On August 4, Britain declared war on Germany.

By the first week in August, 1914, the Triple Alliance, excepting Italy, was at war with the Triple Entente. The little kingdom of Montenegro joined with Serbia ; Luxembourg along with Belgium was swallowed up in the German invasion. Britain's own allies, Portugal and Japan, her Dominions, her Indian Empire and her colonies, all came loyally to her aid. Eleven nations, with populations of more than 1,000,000,000 were at war. The line-up of the Central Empires and the Allies, as they were then called, was thus as follows:

*The Nations at War in August 1914*

*The Central Empires*

\*Austria-Hungary  
\*Germany

\*(Italy, neutral)

\* The original members of the Triple Alliance.

*The Allies*

Serbia  
†Russia  
†France  
Luxembourg  
Belgium  
†Britain and the British Empire  
Montenegro  
Portugal  
Japan

† The original members of the Triple Entente.

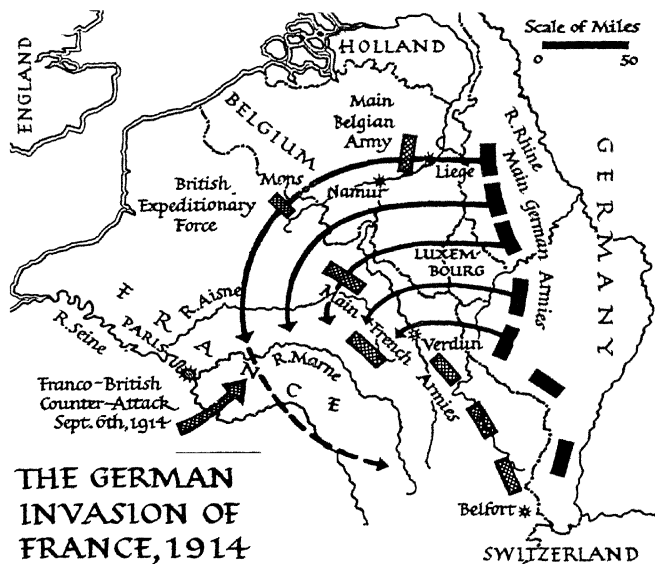
## CHAPTER 2

### THE FIRST PART OF THE WAR, 1914-1916

#### THE OPENING BATTLES

GERMANY began the war with a definite plan of campaign. Ever since France and Russia had become allies, Germany realised that she would have to fight two enemies, one in the west and one in the east, and it seemed to her General Staff that her only chance of victory was to attack and defeat each enemy in turn. So when the war broke out in 1914 she threw the main strength of her army first against France. She had to act before the slower-moving Russians could fully mobilise; she had no time for a frontal attack on France's own hilly fortified frontier between Verdun and Belfort. As we said in Chapter 1, she preferred to take the easier way through Belgium and thence across France's less-protected frontier in the north, even though, by so doing, she brought an angry Britain into the war against herself. Meanwhile smaller German forces stood guard in eastern Germany towards Russia.

The first part of the German plan went like clockwork. For forty-eight hours German troop-trains were running up to the Belgian frontier at ten-minute intervals. The main German army fought its way through Belgium, destroying the Belgian fortresses of Liège and Namur as it passed. Britain sent an expeditionary force across the Channel to France, and it encountered the advancing Germans at Mons, where, after a gallant, dogged resistance, it was forced to join the general retreat of the French army towards Paris.



The German plan to defeat the Allied armies in 1914 took the form of a huge encircling movement through Belgium. It was thrown out of gear by the Allied counter-attack at the Battle of the Marne.

The German plan was to try to trap the French and British armies in a huge encircling movement. (See the above map.) It was expected to take about forty days and to end in the utter defeat and conquest of France. But the plan failed. We know now that it failed mainly because it was too unwieldy. It attempted too much, and too quickly. The manoeuvring of huge modern armies is a most intricate science. Even in the Second World War, with all the motorised forces, air support and radio that were then available, 200 miles was usually the farthest an army



could advance without pausing to reorganise. In 1914 the Germans poured into France, sometimes marching twenty miles a day on foot, and a campaign which had been perfectly prepared and perfectly begun was soon a swarming, tumbling, rather tired mass of men which any setback would throw into complete disorder.

In those days communications were kept by cavalry or motor cyclists, who now lost their way in the confusion. The German commanders were out of touch with the units they were supposed to be commanding, and units were out of touch with one another. Unbelievable though it may seem, the generals at the main German Headquarters on the Western Front sometimes for several days at a time hardly knew where their army was.

On September 6, 1914, when the Germans had reached the River Marne, the French and British counter-attacked. Every available man was thrown in. The Paris garrison was rushed up to the line in taxis and buses off the Paris streets. The astonished Germans fell back to the River Aisne, and there were held fast. The Battle of the Marne is one of the decisive battles of history. It was the end of Germany's plan of campaign and, for the time being, the end of her dreams of conquest in France.

Meanwhile the Russians had begun to move. Roads and railways were fewer on the Eastern Front, and distances were greater. But the Russians concentrated their forces, and were advancing in battle order weeks before they were expected. They met the Austrians and overwhelmed them by sheer weight of numbers, and, after costly fighting, began to invade Austria-Hungary. British newspapers at the time wrote joyfully about the 'Russian Steam-Roller' that was

crushing all resistance before it. But against the Germans the Russians, unhappily, did not fare so well. At the end of August, 1914, the German forces which had been left in eastern Germany defeated a Russian Army at Tannenberg.

Tannenberg was Germany's consolation prize for the Battle of the Marne. It was a great victory. It destroyed thousands of Russia's best troops and hundreds of her guns. It is said to have been planned by two generals, Hindenburg and Ludendorff, who had been sent to the Eastern Front only a few days before it took place. Hindenburg was an old soldier, till then retired from service; Ludendorff was a younger man who had just been taking part in the invasion of Belgium. The German people afterwards made Tannenberg a legend, and Hindenburg and Ludendorff became their great warrior heroes of the First World War.

#### TURKEY AND BULGARIA GO TO WAR

In 1914 Turkey was a great sprawling empire—the Ottoman Empire—covering Syria, Palestine, Mesopotamia (now Iraq) and most of Arabia. She was ruled by a party of revolutionaries who called themselves the Young Turks and who were friendly to Germany. Turkish railways had recently been laid by German engineers; the Turkish army had recently been trained by German officers. It was not surprising, therefore, when in November, 1914, Turkey entered the war on the side of the Central Empires and the Turkish Sultan declared a Holy War on Britain, France and Russia. Turkey's first war-like action was to close the important waterway of the Dardanelles to shipping.

Britain replied vigorously. An Australian-New Zealand

Army Corps was sent to Egypt to hold the Suez Canal—'Anzacs' they were called. A British-Indian army was sent to Mesopotamia. Early in 1915, according to a plan first suggested by Winston Churchill, then First Lord of the Admiralty, a British and French fleet was sent to try to break through the Dardanelles, and later an army of British and Anzacs were landed at Gallipoli. (See the map on p. 39.) But in desperate, heroic fighting neither the fleet nor the army in Gallipoli could overcome the stubborn Turkish defences.

The army in Gallipoli fought in rocky, scrub-like country under a sweltering sun. Supplies and even fresh water had to be brought by sea and landed on the open beaches, where they were often under shell-fire. Sometimes as many as 100 supply ships at once were lying off shore. The army suffered terribly, but it always seemed as if one more offensive might succeed.

In October, 1915, Bulgaria, encouraged by the Turkish resistance, entered the war on the side of the Central Empires. Bulgaria had old scores to pay off against Serbia. German, Austrian and Bulgarian forces invaded Serbia, and Serbia, over whom the original quarrel in 1914 had started, was totally defeated and overrun. The Serbian army retreated through the mountainous, snow-bound country of Albania to the sea, where remnants of it were rescued by Allied ships. The aged Serbian King retreated with his army, carried the whole way on a stretcher. German reinforcements and munitions now came down through Serbia on the Serbian railways to Turkey and to Gallipoli.

This was more than the British and Anzacs in Gallipoli

could be expected to face. If the Turks could not be beaten when they fought alone, they could hardly be beaten when they fought with German help. It was a sad moment, but there could be no other choice. The British and Anzacs in Gallipoli had to give up the fight and were evacuated.

#### THE GREAT RUSSIAN RETREAT OF 1915

The Dardanelles was Britain's great failure of the war. Its seriousness was seen all too soon. For Turkey's closing of the Dardanelles had the effect of cutting all direct communication between Russia and her allies, Britain and France. Russia, though so huge a country, with so long a coastline, has no sea-ports that can be easily reached. We have seen the same problem again in the Second World War. But during the First World War the problem was far worse. Russia's industries and railways at that time were backward, and she could not produce the munitions she needed.

Russia's system of government had changed little in the course of the centuries. Her Emperor, the Tsar, was an absolute monarch. He was assisted by a Council of Ministers whom he appointed and dismissed at will. The huge Russian civil service was cumbersome, out of date and corrupt. A parliament, or Duma, with none of the rights of a real parliament, had been dissolved at the start of the war. The mass of the Russian people were peasants, largely illiterate, incredibly patient. Yet, with all his powers, the Tsar of the time—Nicholas II—was really a weakly man, rather ordinary, shy and superstitious. The Tsaritsa Alexandra, the Empress, a sick but a much stronger-minded character, was under the influence of the rascally

monk Rasputin, and her constant interference with state affairs was disastrous.

All in all, the Russia of the First World War was not only cut off from her allies and ill-equipped, but she was very badly governed. We are often surprised that the Russian Revolution did not take place years before it did. Already in the winter of 1914 Russian soldiers were marching without boots; Russian regiments were going into battle with half the number of rifles they should have had; Russian artillery was being 'rationed' to only four shells a day. In May, 1915, the Germans and Austrians, under the command of the victorious generals, Hindenburg and Ludendorff, launched a great offensive against them.

This time there was no 'Russian Steam-Roller' for the British newspapers to write about. In six months of fighting Hindenburg and Ludendorff drove the Russians back into the heart of Russia. The Russians, half-armed and unable to obtain supplies abroad, were helpless to resist. In the six months they lost 2,500,000 men, and an area more than five times the size of Great Britain was 'scorched' and devastated.

#### ITALY GOES TO WAR

In May, 1915, Italy entered the war on the side of the Allies. Her old associates of the Triple Alliance, Austria-Hungary and Germany, accused her of deserting and betraying them. But Italy had always resented the way Austria had plunged into war against Serbia in 1914; she also cherished strong ties of friendship with England, and she hoped to 'redeem' parts of the Austrian borderland where Italians were living under Austrian rule.

Italy was a welcome addition to the Allies at a time when the war was not going too well for them. But Italy's part in the war had to be fought along the Austro-Italian frontier—a high Alpine country, difficult for her to attack, easy for her enemies to defend. Every crag and mountain pass was a natural fortress. Trenches were blasted out of the solid rock; big guns were hoisted into position by rope railways. It is not surprising that the Italian Front became hopelessly deadlocked. On the sector of the Italian Front near the River Isonzo the Italians fought no fewer than eleven great battles in two years and lost nearly 1,000,000 men, all for the gain of a few miles of ground.

#### A NEW KIND OF WAR—THE DEADLOCK OF THE TRENCHES

The First World War was unlike any war that had ever been known before. It was a war of great 'mass armies'. The whole fit man-power of every nation was serving. Battles were fought which lasted for days, even for weeks and months, in which hundreds of thousands of men took part. The Battle of Waterloo in 1815 was fought by 170,000 men; the Battle of Sedan in 1870 by 300,000 men. But the Battle of the Marne was fought by over a million.

Even a country like Britain, which had never before had a big army, had to have one now. For us, in Britain, wars in the past had been fought by our navy and by small bodies of professional soldiers. But Lord Kitchener, our Secretary of State for War in 1914, called for volunteers, and began to build up an army of 3,000,000 men, sometimes called after him 'Kitchener's Army'. Even this was not enough, and in 1916, for the first time in our history,



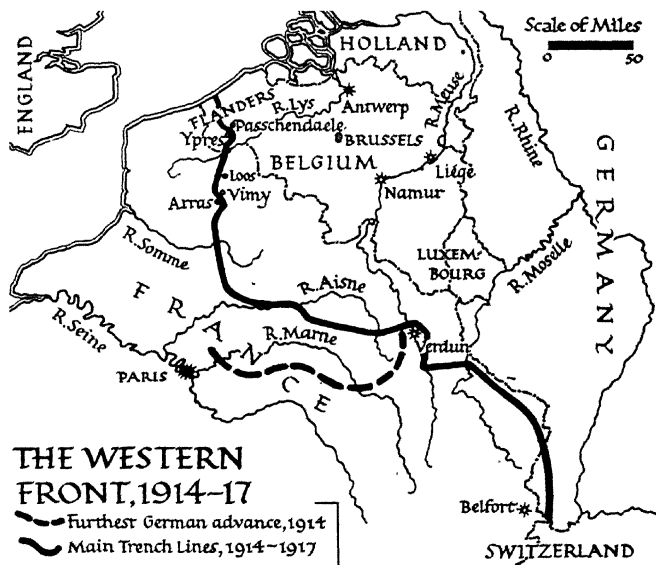
EARL KITCHENER (Field-Marshal), British Secretary of State for War, 1914-1916.

the British Government brought in 'conscription. By the end of the war Britain had an army of 5,000,000. Germany meanwhile had an army of between 7,000,000 and 8,000,000; Russia is believed to have had over 14,000,000.

Methods of fighting in the First World War were unlike any methods that had ever been known before. Methods of fighting change in the course of history.

Once wars were fought with clubs and spears, then with bows and arrows and lances, then with pikes and muskets. Recently we fought with tanks and bombers. But the First World War was essentially a war of the rapid-firing rifle and machine-gun.

There was no more romance or glamour in fighting. The cavalry charge with pennons flying was a thing of the past. The soldier wore a practical, dull-coloured uniform, like the British khaki or the German field-grey. To give himself better protection he found he had to dig himself into a trench. Up to the Battle of the Marne the Western Front had been 'open' and fast moving. But the Germans then dug themselves into trenches along the high ground above the River Aisne, and the whole Western Front gradually developed into two long, ragged lines of trenches facing one another, with No Man's Land between them. In front of each line of trenches were thick barbed-wire entanglements, and behind were other lines of trenches and 'dug-outs'. The soldier suffered appalling hardships,



After the failure of the original German plan in 1914 the battle-lines on the Western Front hardened into trench warfare and remained dead-locked for nearly four years.

especially when in bad weather the trenches became water-logged. Only the most efficient medical services saved him, under such conditions, from being swept away by sickness. And allowing for certain obvious differences, the situation was similar on other fronts—in scrubby Gallipoli, in spacious Russia, and in the rocky heights of the Italian Alps.

Where both sides were roughly of equal strength in men and arms, the fighting gradually developed into 'immobile' fighting or 'position' fighting. The soldier, in the shelter



of his trench, was not easy to attack. No Man's Land, raked by machine-gun fire and peppered by shrapnel, was not easy to cross. The trenches, as it were, stood still. Thus there were complete trench deadlocks on the Western Front, in Gallipoli and on the Italian Front. The map on



‘OVER THE TOP’

An incident of trench warfare. British infantry of the First World War advancing to the attack.

page 27 shows the position on the Western Front, which, except for minor shifts, remained unchanged for four years. Only in Serbia, for example, where one side was weak, or in Russia, where one side was disastrously ill-equipped, could the trench lines be broken through and open, mobile fighting take place once more.

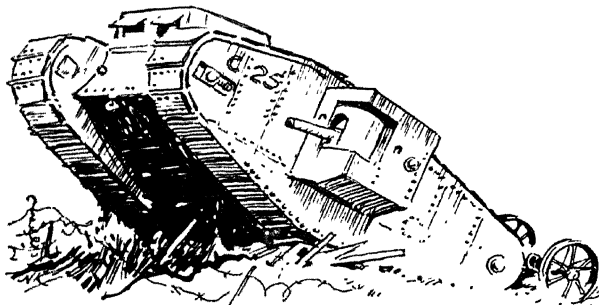
In order to break the deadlock of the trenches, when it occurred, various new weapons were tried, like the hand-grenade, the trench mortar, poison gas and the aeroplane. Sometimes long underground tunnels were dug under the enemy's trenches, which were then exploded by means of mines. But the generals on either side came to rely more and more on their big guns, and tried to batter down by means of shell-fire the enemy's trenches and barbed wire, his rifle-fire and his machine-guns. In later offensives of the war on the Western Front there was sometimes one gun to every six or seven yards of the sector under attack, and more shells were fired in a single bombardment than had been fired throughout the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871.

Thus the story of the Western Front was that of one big trench battle after another. The armies suffered terrible losses of men for little or no gain of ground. The British dug themselves into trenches round about Ypres in Flanders and there, in less than 100 square miles of sodden, muddy fields, in four years of fighting they lost more men than they lost in the whole of the Second World War. The British fought great trench battles at Loos in 1915 and on the River Somme in 1916.

The biggest of all trench battles was fought between the French and Germans at Verdun in 1916. The Battle of Verdun was in fact the biggest battle of all history, the most ferocious and the most costly. There was nothing to compare with it in the Second World War, not even the Russian defence of Stalingrad. The German attack on Verdun began in February, 1916, and for nine months the fighting raged. Nearly 1,000,000 men, French and Ger-

mans, were killed, wounded or missing. Whole hillsides were blown to bits; not a house or even a tree was left standing. But the French, with their inspiring battle-cry, "They shall not pass", stood firm. The Germans did not pass. The fighting at last died down, and when it was all over the trench positions on either side had changed hardly at all. The biggest battle in all history was one of the least decisive.

Yet the tank that we know so well to-day, which could



THE TANK OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR

'The armoured car on caterpillar tractors', first used by the British on the Western Front in September 1916.

rumble its way across No Man's Land, was not used to any great extent till the last two years of the war. The first tanks, it is said, were made on the recommendation of Winston Churchill. The tank was really the solution to the deadlock of the trenches.

#### 'TOTAL WAR'

For this new kind of war which was now being fought, and for the great mass armies which were fighting it, the

rifles and machine-guns, the big guns and shells had all to be made. They had to be made in vaster quantities than anyone had imagined. They had to be made for a war which lasted longer and cost more than anyone had originally expected. In Britain in 1915 there was a serious 'Shell Crisis'. Lloyd George became Minister of Munitions and afterwards Prime



DAVID LLOYD GEORGE, British Minister of Munitions 1915-1916, and Prime Minister 1916-1922.

Minister. He formed a Coalition Government of all parties—with nothing less, he believed, could Britain be properly organised for war—and under his drive and energy the industries of Britain were turned over to munitions. In four years British factories produced 250,000,000 shells, and other weapons in proportion.

Britain made a huge effort, but other countries made efforts equally great. Even women went into the munition factories, wore uniforms and did jobs which women had never done before. A Women's Army Auxiliary Corps—the W.A.A.C's—in khaki uniform, lived under military discipline and worked in army camps, canteens and offices. New forms of government, new controls and rationing—almost a whole new way of life—had to be worked out. Some nations, especially the industrial nations like Britain, France or Germany, found the necessary changes not too difficult to make; but Russia, then with few developed industries and under the inefficient Tsarist rule, found the changes altogether beyond her power.

To-day 'total war' is no longer a strange idea to us. The Second World War has been even more of a total war than the First. But in 1914 a war which could absorb every man and woman and all a country's industry and wealth was a new thing in the world.

### CHAPTER 3

#### THE MIDDLE PART OF THE WAR, 1916-1917

##### THE WAR AT SEA, BLOCKADE AND SUBMARINE

**A**LL this time another war was being fought—the war at sea. We have said little of this war till now, though in many ways it was more important than the whole of the deadlocked war on land. The sea was England's special element, and the war at sea was England's special war. If Germany had the most powerful army, England had the most powerful navy. If Germany had begun the war in 1914 with a definite plan on land, England had begun the war with a definite plan at sea. England's plan was Blockade.

The British navy swept the seas clear of every German, Austrian and Turkish surface ship. Several German cruisers were sunk, and what was left of the German navy took refuge in German ports. German sea-ways commerce was strangled. Britain even stopped neutral ships which she believed were trading with her enemies, as, under international law, she had every right to do.

It was the Allied blockade, more than any other single

cause, which in the end brought Germany to her defeat and downfall. Germany could obtain no supplies abroad. German industries went short of materials such as oil, rubber, cotton, nitrates (for explosives and fertilisers) and copper, all of which were essential to the war. The German people went short of food and clothing. Towards the last year of the war German workers had only half the food values they needed to do their work. German children fainted on the way to school from sheer hunger.

Meanwhile Germany was trying her own blockade against Britain. German submarines prowled the seas torpedoing British and Allied merchant ships. The British Admiralty used every kind of counter-measure. British merchant ships were armed with guns. They were protected with 'dazzle-painting'—or camouflage, as it is now called. 'Mystery' ships or 'Q' ships were sent out—warships disguised as merchantmen, specially designed for fighting submarines. At home in Britain the strictest rationing of food was enforced. A Ministry of Shipping was set up to see that only the most necessary cargoes were carried. At last in 1917 the convoy system was introduced, the depth-charge and under-water sound-detector devices were invented, and the terrible menace of the submarine was gradually overcome. But at the height of the German submarine war British losses were such that one ship out of every four to leave a British port never came back. Britain only just avoided starvation and collapse.

The Germans tried other forms of sea warfare. From time to time their cruisers sallied out into the North Sea and raided towns along the British coast. But only once was there a major action between the main British and

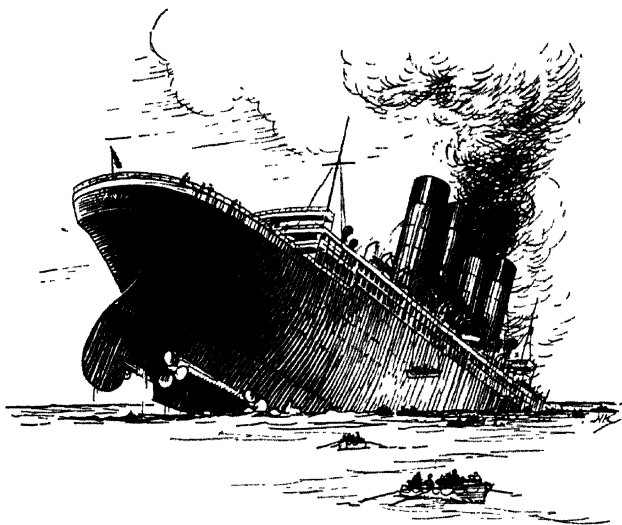
German battle-fleets. In May, 1916, the British Grand Fleet under Jellicoe and Beatty met the German High Seas Fleet off Jutland. The battle was not decisive, and its closing stages were hampered by fog. The German gunnery was excellent, and the British lost twice the number of ships that the Germans lost. But the German High Seas Fleet was badly mauled. It limped back to port, and it did not attempt to put to sea again till at the end of the war it came out to surrender.

#### AMERICA GOES TO WAR

In 1914, when the war broke out, President Wilson had declared America to be neutral. The sympathies of by far the greater part of the American people were with Britain, and, like the British people, they were angered by Germany's invasion of Belgium and by Germany's brutal conduct during the invasion. But they had no wish to be involved in what they then considered to be a purely European war. Isolationism was always strong in the United States.

But as the war went on the American people found it more and more difficult to steer clear of it. They found that wars in the modern world affected even the nations that were at peace and wanted to remain at peace. American industries began to supply munitions to the Allies; American banks began to lend them great sums of money. Then the Allied navies, as part of the Allied blockade, were stopping neutral merchant ships, and some of these ships were American. More serious still, German submarines, as part of the German blockade, were not just stopping American ships, but sinking them outright.

In May, 1915, without giving any warning whatever, a

THE SINKING OF THE *LUSITANIA*

On May 1, 1915, a German U-boat torpedoed and sank the British Cunard liner, the *Lusitania*, with the loss of over 1000 lives, of which 128 were American.

German submarine off the southern coast of Ireland torpedoed the *Lusitania*, a British Atlantic liner carrying American passengers. The great ship sank in eighteen minutes. Over 1000 lives were lost, many of them American, many of them children. The torpedoing of the *Lusitania* was a crime as senseless and inhuman as any the Germans committed during the war.

America was on the point of declaring war on Germany there and then, but it was not for almost another two years that she actually did so. President Wilson again and again protested against German outrages at sea. Germany



always argued that she had no other means of stopping the munitions which America was now sending the Allies than by her submarines. Even the *Lusitania*, it was said, had been carrying munitions.

Early in 1917 Germany started a new 'unrestricted' phase of the submarine war, and she announced that she would sink any ship at sight, Allied or neutral, if it seemed to her that the ship was bearing towards an Allied port. Finally, she tried to stir up disturbances against the United States in Mexico. On April 6, 1917, the United States, its patience exhausted, declared war on Germany.

Thus the enormous power of America in men, munitions and money was ranged on the side of the Allied nations. President Wilson's earnest leadership and his fine, ringing speeches put new heart into them. American industries were geared for war. An American army of several millions of men was raised and trained and shipped to the Western Front. The Germans were confident that their submarines would still play havoc with American ships. But by that summer of 1917 the convoy system was beginning to work, the Americans themselves were providing hundreds of destroyers and escort vessels, and not one American troopship sailing to Europe was lost at sea.

#### 'THE YEAR OF AGONY'

The year of 1917 was 'the year of agony'. Every nation in Europe was suffering from war-strain. Trouble of one sort or another was brewing in all of them. Germany and Austria-Hungary were suffering from the Allied blockade. They were short of food, and their civilian populations were sometimes near starvation. In Germany

during the summer of 1917 there was a serious political crisis. The Kaiser twice changed his Chancellor. There were mutinies on German battleships. In Austria-Hungary the nationalities—the Czechs, Slovaks, Poles, Rumanians and Serbs, whom we have already mentioned—were becoming restive and raising their voices against a war for which they had no sympathy and which brought them only loss and suffering. Many of their leaders were under arrest; many were in exile; a few had reached Allied countries and were working with the Allies. The old Austrian Emperor Francis Joseph had just died, and the Emperor Charles, who succeeded him, felt so strongly his country's need for peace that he tried to desert his German friends and opened secret parleys with France. Even far-away Turkey had her trials and tribulations; British forces were advancing into Palestine and Mesopotamia; the Arabs were in full revolt.

In 1917 Britain withstood the worst phase of the German submarine war. British cities were being raided by German Zeppelins and aeroplanes. On the Western Front the old deadlock of the trenches continued. The British Army fought dreary, wasting offensives at Vimy, Messines and Passchendaele—famous names they once were. France was war-weary; several French regiments, tired of the deadlock and the slaughter, mutinied and refused to fight; several French political leaders were arrested for treason. Italy, too, was war-weary; she suffered a heavy defeat along her Alpine front at Caporetto, and for a time it looked as if she would be forced to sue for peace.

Thus the whole picture of the war in 1917, both for the

Allies and the Central Empires, was very dark. Indeed, it was none too soon that America, fresh to the fight, brought new help and hope to the Allied side.

But one great nation in 1917 did not stand the strain, and that nation was Russia.

#### THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

For a time it had seemed that Russia had rallied from the fearful defeats which Hindenburg and Ludendorff had inflicted on her in 1915. Her army was re-formed. More important still, her industries were reorganised. Allied ships, using the same northern convoy route which they used again in the Second World War, were landing supplies at outlying ports like Archangel and Murmansk. In 1916 Russia gathered strength to launch a great offensive against Austria—the Brusilov Offensive, so called after the Russian general who planned it.

The Brusilov Offensive was one of the surprises of the war. The Austrian Front ‘broke like a pie-crust’. The Russians again invaded Austria, and the British newspapers again started writing joyfully about ‘the Russian Steam-Roller’. To all appearances the whole Eastern Front down to the Balkans was then springing into renewed life and vigour. To the south a new ally, Rumania, suddenly entered the war on the Allied side and joined in the offensive against Austria; and Greece, it seemed, would shortly follow Rumania’s example.

But appearances were deceptive. The Rumanian army was defeated, and most of Rumania was overrun by German and Austrian forces. The Brusilov Offensive had made a brilliant beginning, but in six weeks’ continuous fighting



In 1915 the German and Austrian armies attacked all along the Eastern Front and invaded Russia. Meanwhile a British and French expedition tried to force the Dardanelles and bring aid to Russia.

it cost Russia 750,000 men. It could hardly be counted a victory. It was, indeed, the last of Russia's offensive battles.

The Russian people could endure no more. There was no strength or spirit left in them. They had lost their best and bravest—nearly half a million casualties a month. Devastation had done its work. Russia was ready for revolution.

Russia had already had a long history of uprisings and revolts. Groups of 'professional revolutionaries' lived 'underground' in Russian cities, agitating among the workers, secretly publishing revolutionary literature, and now and then assassinating a hated Minister or police officer. Popular discontent had flared up into an attempted revolution in 1905. The old rule of the Tsar was not only tyrannical, but inefficient and hopelessly incapable of waging a modern total war. Dishonest officials mismanaged the public services. The big towns and cities were short of food, but stores of food, often rotting away in country barns, could not be delivered because the railways had broken down. Prices for the little that could be bought had doubled and trebled. A 'black market', as we should call it to-day, was flourishing. In March, 1917, the workers in the factories at Petrograd (now Leningrad) went on strike and marched through the streets shouting for peace and bread, and in a few days the entire country was in revolution. One of the greatest upheavals of history had begun.

The Tsar abdicated and was put under arrest. The old police, once the terror of the Russian people, fled into hiding. For a time the Labour leader, Kerensky, tried to

rule the country with a Provisional Government. He tried to keep Russia in the war on the Allied side. He tried to restore discipline in the army, and toured the front making fiery, patriotic speeches to the Russian troops.

But Russia wanted peace above all things, not speeches. She was sick of fighting and suffering, and no power on earth could now have kept her in the war. The Russian army gradually disbanded itself and began marching home; the workers took over the factories; the peasants seized the land. Hundreds of former factory-owners and land-owners were murdered or escaped into exile abroad. In November, 1917, Kerensky was swept away by a new uprising of the extreme revolutionary party of the Bolsheviks under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky.

Early in 1918, at the Polish border town of Brest-Litovsk, Trotsky made peace with German and Austrian delegates. It was more of a surrender than a peace. Russia ceded huge slices of territory to Germany. German and Austrian troops afterwards occupied the whole of the Ukraine, where they went foraging for stores of grain to send back to their famished homelands. Russia was finished with the war.

#### THE WORLD AT WAR

Altogether thirty nations were involved in the First World War. During 1917 several of the South American and Central American republics followed the lead of the United States and declared war on Germany. In Asia, Siam (or Thailand) and China declared war on Germany. Albania was occupied by German and Austrian forces, and parts of Persia were occupied by British forces. In the end,

out of a world population of 1,600,000,000, it may be said that 1,400,000,000 were at war.

*The Nations in the First World War*

*The Central Empires*

Austria-Hungary  
Germany  
Turkey  
Bulgaria

(Albania and Persia occupied)

*The Allies*

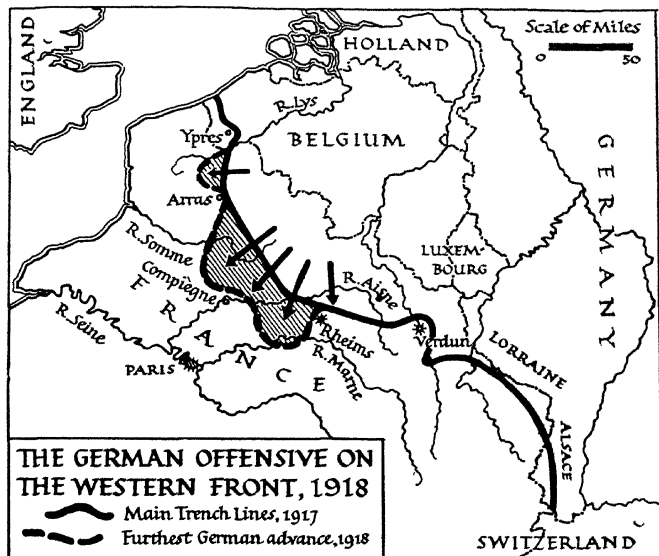
Serbia  
Russia  
France  
Luxembourg  
Belgium  
Britain and the British  
Empire  
Montenegro  
Portugal  
Japan  
Italy  
Rumania  
Greece  
The United States of America  
Panama  
Cuba  
Guatemala  
Siam  
China  
Liberia  
Brazil  
Nicaragua  
Costa Rica  
Haiti  
Honduras

## CHAPTER 4

### THE FINAL PART OF THE WAR, 1918

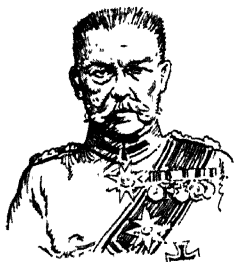
#### GERMANY'S LAST BID FOR VICTORY

**I**N 1918 Germany made her last bid for victory. She was now at peace with Russia, and her armies which had been fighting on the Eastern Front against Russia could now be transferred to the Western Front against France and



In the Spring of 1918 the Germans concentrated all their available men and resources in a supreme attempt to break the trench deadlock and defeat the Allied armies on the Western Front.





PAUL VON HINDENBURG, (Field-Marshal), Commander of the German Army, 1916-1918, later President of the German Republic, 1925-1934.

Britain. For the first time in the war she could concentrate all her forces in one theatre. American reinforcements on the Western Front had not yet arrived in strength, and most of those that had arrived were still untrained. The situation for the moment was much in Germany's favour, and between March and July, 1918, the German commanders, Hindenburg and Ludendorff, launched a series of five offensives—one a month—at different points along the Western Front.

The world watched breathlessly the spectacle of millions of fighting men in mortal combat. Sometimes it seemed the Germans came dangerously near to breaking through the Allied trench positions and destroying the French and British armies. In the last of the five offensives the Germans once more reached the River Marne and once more threatened Paris, but once more, as in 1914, it was at the Marne that they were at last decisively repulsed.

The Allies appointed the French General Foch (soon to be made Marshal Foch) Commander-in-Chief of all their armies on the Western Front. The second Battle of the Marne, as it was called, was the beginning of his great counter-blows. The Germans reeled back. They had exhausted their reserves in their five offensives. Their divisions were often at half strength; some had been continuously in action for weeks. Hindenburg and Luden-

dorff had made their gamble, they had thrown in all they had, and they had failed.

The Americans were now arriving in France in ever increasing numbers. Indeed, the number of Americans on the Western Front was soon greater than the total surviving strength of the German army. And, moreover, they were fresh and unused. The Allies were now using tanks, and using them in mass formation, and were overrunning the German trenches at will. By September and October Foch was striking everywhere, giving his enemy no rest. Wary, demoralised German soldiers began to surrender to the advancing Allies by the hundred. The German rear lines and railways swarmed with deserters. The German people were starving. They were short of almost everything that makes life possible. Clearly Germany had lost the war.

#### THE COLLAPSE OF GERMANY'S ALLIES

But it was not Germany, it was Germany's allies who first collapsed. They were utterly exhausted. Bulgaria sued for an armistice at the end of September, 1918. Turkey sued for an armistice at the end of October. In Austria-Hungary the subject nationalities—the Czechs, Slovaks, Poles, Rumanians and Serbs—were in revolt, clamouring for peace and liberty. During October the Italians defeated what was left of the Austro-Hungarian army at the Battle of Vittorio Veneto.



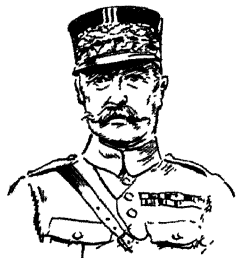
ERICH LUDENDORFF (General), who shared with Hindenburg the command of the German Army, 1916-1918.

Austria and Hungary themselves drew apart from one another, each set up a separate Government, and each now sued for an armistice. The Austrian Emperor Charles fled the country.

#### THE COLLAPSE OF GERMANY

In January, 1918, before the fighting we have just described had started, President Wilson in the United States had made one of his great speeches and had laid down in simple, straightforward language the Fourteen Points \*—the aims, he said, for which America had entered the war and the conditions on which she would be ready to make peace. With certain reservations, all the Allies accepted the Fourteen Points as the statement of their own war aims. In October, 1918, defeated Germany announced that she too would accept the Fourteen Points, and appealed to President Wilson to grant her an armistice and peace.

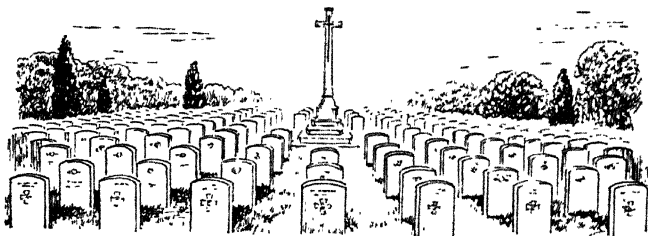
But President Wilson was determined to make no peace without ‘unmistakable guarantees’ of good faith from Germany. He had once said :



FERDINAND FOCH (Marshal),  
Allied Commander-in-Chief on the  
Western Front, 1918.

“The world must be made safe for democracy”, and he now insisted that he would not parley with “the military masters and monarchical autocrats”, who had been the rulers of Germany, who, he believed, bore the responsibility for starting the war, and whom he could no longer trust. Moreover, he said, the

\* Appendix I.



THE COST OF WAR

A British military cemetery in France. The First World War cost over 10,000,000 lives on the battle-field, and perhaps 10,000,000 civilian lives by disease, starvation and other hardships.

final armistice must be signed in the presence of Marshal Foch, and the military terms must be Marshal Foch's terms. There was nothing left for the German Kaiser but to abdicate, and he escaped—a saddened, ignominious figure—to Holland. Several of the lesser German princelings also abdicated. Ludendorff resigned.

Her war-time leaders gone, the whole of Germany was soon in revolution. A new 'democratic' Chancellor, Ebert, took over the German Government, and sent delegates to meet Marshal Foch. On November 11, 1918, in Marshal Foch's private railway carriage, on a siding behind the Western Front at Compiègne, an armistice was signed.

Under the terms of the armistice Germany was forced to evacuate Alsace-Lorraine and all the countries she had occupied during the war—Belgium, the Balkans, Poland and the western parts of Russia; she withdrew her armed forces from her territory west of the Rhine; she

surrendered to the Allies masses of guns, aeroplanes, railway engines, lorries, most of her navy and all her submarines.

The Allied triumph was complete. The First World War was over.

PART TWO  
BETWEEN THE TWO WORLD WARS,  
1919-1939

CHAPTER 5  
THE EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT

THE PEACE CONFERENCE OF PARIS

THE armistice of November 11, 1918, had brought the war to an end and had enforced the Allies' immediate military demands on Germany. The Peace Conference, which was to make the permanent and final settlement, had still to be held.

But the permanent and final settlement, as it soon proved, was not going to be easy. Nations, whether victorious or defeated, do not switch over from war to peace by just waving a magic wand or by just signing a piece of paper. The wastage and destruction of four years of war could not be put to rights in a hurry. Worse still, the hatreds of war died very hard. Countries wherever the war had raged were in terrible distress. More than 10,000,000 men had lost their lives on the battle-field. Farmlands had gone uncultivated; roads and railways were



GEORGIS CLEMENCEAU, French Premier,  
1917-1920.

worn out; homes were destroyed; cities were ruined and deserted; whole nations were starving. In the winter of 1918 there was a world-wide epidemic of a deadly type of influenza.

Germany herself was in revolution. The Austro-Hungarian Empire had broken up; Austria and Hungary had become separate states, and big slices of

their territories were being parcelled out among the new nations which were now being formed—Poland, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. Other slices had gone to Italy and Rumania. Russia was in revolution and about to be involved in civil war. The old Ottoman Empire had broken up. Turkey had become a separate state, and lands over which she had once held sway were soon to be divided up as Iraq, Arabia, Trans-Jordan, Syria and Palestine. All these countries had to find their proper governments and proper frontiers.

The Peace Conference, which was to decide these many questions, gathered in Paris in January, 1919. In all, thirty-two nations were represented. President Wilson came from the United States, Lloyd George from Britain, Clemenceau from France, and Orlando from Italy. These four men—the Big Four, as they came to be known—were soon bearing the main responsibility of the Conference.

## DEMOCRACY AND SELF-DETERMINATION

What sort of a Brave New World would the peacemakers of Paris seek to build? What were the ideals and principles that were to guide their work? A terrible war had come to an end; many had called it the 'War to end wars'; sincere and thinking men everywhere were determined that such a catastrophe should never happen again. Here in Paris in 1919 the delegates of thirty-two nations had the opportunity of making a peace that would last. How did they use that opportunity?

The first of the ideals of the future peace, it was generally agreed, was democracy. President Wilson had demanded that "the world must be made safe for democracy". The First World War itself in many ways had been a war of democracy against tyranny; the democratic Allies had won, and the old tyrants—Russia, Germany, Austria-Hungary and Turkey—had gone down to defeat. The new nations that were emerging from the war were democratic and were soon drawing up constitutions and electing parliaments. Even Germany, Austria and Hungary had now driven out their 'military masters and monarchical autocrats' and were forming democratic governments.



WOODROW WILSON, President of the United States, 1916-1921.



The second of the ideals of the future peace was self-determination. No people, however small or weak, should be made subject to another people without its consent. The new frontiers of the nations must be drawn so that no nationality was separated from the nation of its choice.

The ideals of democracy and self-determination were much discussed in those days. Surely—so argued sincere and thinking men in 1919—a world composed of democratic nations, each freely electing its own parliament, each settled within its clear, national frontiers, would be a world that loved peace and would preserve peace.

The ideals of democracy and self-determination underlay President Wilson's Fourteen Points. In Chapter 4 we said that the Fourteen Points\* were the conditions on which America was ready to make peace. They had been accepted by the Allies. The Germans had signed the armistice believing that they would be the basis of the peace to be. The Fourteen Points consequently became a very important document at the Peace Conference. It made, in fact, a Great Charter, by which democracy, self-determination and peace were to become real and living things in the world.

But, unhappily, the Fourteen Points were sometimes rather vague. Also unhappily many of the delegates of the nations at Paris thought less of ideals and principles than of advancing their own national interests. Even the Big Four were soon in constant disagreement among themselves.

President Wilson always took the extreme idealist point of view. He was a proud, obstinate, aloof, mistrustful man, who would seldom compromise. The Fourteen Points

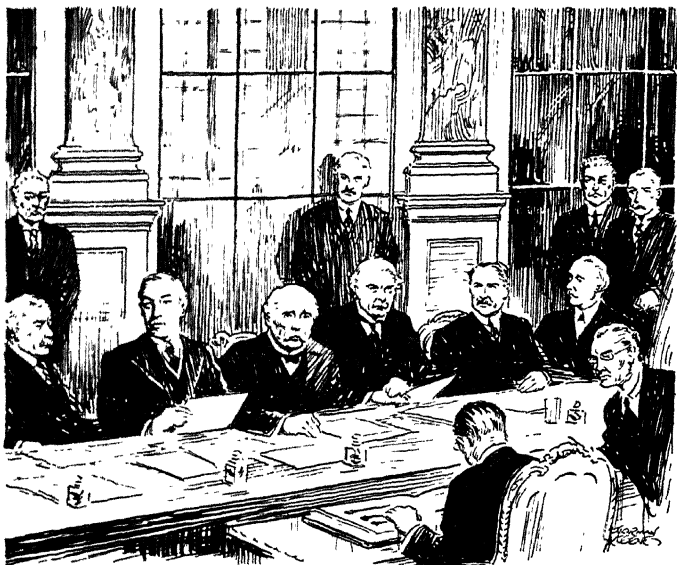
\* Page 46; Appendix I.

had been originally his own, and he had come to Paris to see that they were realised. He wanted 'open covenants of peace', 'equality of trade', 'impartial adjustment of colonial claims', and so forth. These were fine-sounding words. But it was fatally easy to bicker and quarrel over almost every one of the Fourteen Points when it became a question of 'the practical details of the application'.

Clemenceau, who so often opposed Wilson in Paris, took the extreme realist point of view. He was a hard, embittered man who would stand no nonsense. He wanted security for his beloved France, so that Germany could never again have strength to invade her; he wanted reparations for the damage that Germany had done; he wanted the total destruction of German military power; and sometimes it seemed as if it meant nothing to him if the means were fair or foul so long as he achieved his purpose. Very often the meetings of the Big Four in Paris during those months in the spring of 1919 were little more than battles of wits and wits between President Wilson and Clemenceau. More than once the Peace Conference was on the point of breaking down altogether.

#### THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES

But in the end the Peace Conference of Paris hammered out five treaties of peace, which were duly signed with each of the defeated enemy countries. Germany signed her treaty on June 28, 1919. It was signed with some ceremony in the Hall of Mirrors at the Palace of Versailles in the presence of leading Allied soldiers and statesmen. Thereafter President Wilson returned home to the United States, and Lloyd George to England, and the work of the Peace



#### THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES

The treaty was signed in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles on June 28, 1919. The seated figures on the far side of the table, from left to right, are Orlando, President Wilson, Clemenceau, Lloyd George, Bonar Law and Balfour. In front are the two German delegates.

Conference was brought to an end by a so-called Conference of Ambassadors.

Austria signed her treaty at St. Germain on September 10, 1919. Bulgaria signed her treaty at Neuilly on November 27, 1919. Hungary signed her treaty at the Grand Trianon at Versailles on June 4, 1920. Turkey signed her treaty at Sèvres on August 10, 1920.

The map on page 82 shows how the Treaty of Versailles

altered Germany's frontiers. The old French provinces of Alsace-Lorraine, which Germany had seized after the war of 1870-1871, were restored to France. As compensation for the damage done by Germany to the French coal-fields during the German occupation of northern France, the Saar coal-fields were taken over by France for a period of fifteen years, and the Saar territory was administered by the League of Nations. Two small districts—Eupen and Malmédy—were ceded to Belgium. After plebiscites of the inhabitants, a part of Schleswig went to Denmark, and a part of Upper Silesia to Poland. Memel was set aside as the port of the new State of Lithuania, and was afterwards forcibly invaded and seized by Lithuanian troops. But the biggest slice of all—the so-called Polish Corridor, a territory largely inhabited by Poles—was cut out of the flank of eastern Germany so that the new State of Poland should have her access to the sea which had been promised her. Danzig, with a population almost wholly German, was created a Free City, was set aside as Poland's port and was administered by the League of Nations. All Germany's former colonial possessions overseas were taken away from her and handed over to the Powers, chiefly Britain, the British Dominions, France and Japan, who had occupied them during the war.

Under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles Germany was also to pay reparations for the loss and damage of which she had been the cause. She was to deliver merchant ships, 'ton for ton and class for class', to replace those she had sunk during her submarine war. She was to dissolve her General Staff. She was to reduce her army to 100,000 men, and she was allowed no planes, tanks or heavy guns. She was to reduce her navy to six small battleships, six light

cruisers and twelve other craft, and she was allowed no submarines. She was to 'de-militarise' the Rhineland—that is, she was not permitted to keep an armed soldier or a fortification anywhere along the River Rhine—and the Allies were to occupy the area for a number of years. Her Kaiser and several German officers were to be tried as war criminals.

The Treaty of Versailles also set out in full the Covenant of the League of Nations, which President Wilson and the peace-makers at Paris believed would be a sort of super-government of nations for the prevention of war.

It is foolish to say, as is sometimes done, that the Treaty of Versailles was not harsh. The treaty was harsh—very harsh. Naturally Germany resisted it, and parts of it she never carried out. Her frontiers were re-drawn in the way we have just described, though she bitterly protested against the arrangements made, in particular in Upper Silesia and the Polish Corridor. But Germany never paid her reparations in full; she never reduced her army to 100,000 men; she resorted to all sorts of tricks and deceptions to evade the restrictions on planes, tanks, heavy guns and submarines. The General Staff was dissolved, but many of the old generals stayed at their posts and used their influence to play politics. The Kaiser had now escaped to Holland, and was never punished; only twelve German officers—commanders of submarines and commandants of prisoner-of-war camps—were indeed brought to trial as war criminals on clear and serious charges, but German judges let them off scot free or with ridiculously light sentences.

How near did the Treaty of Versailles come to the

Fourteen Points? Would a harsher treaty—or a more lenient one—have given Europe permanent peace? Was the treaty just, but the carrying out of it a failure? These are questions which will always be discussed. We will not try to answer them; but in this book we shall have to tell the story of how the peace, once won, was gradually lost, and how, in the short space of twenty years, the world was plunged again into a fearful war.

#### THE NEW NATIONS OF EUROPE

The map on page 70 shows how the Treaties of St. Germain, Neuilly and the Trianon drew the frontiers of Central Europe. It shows the new nations which were formed. On the whole the frontiers fitted the nationalities very accurately, and, if self-determination is to be understood to mean that every nationality belongs to its own proper nation, then these peace treaties, from this point of view, must certainly be counted among the fairest that have ever been made.

Even so, the nationalities were not always satisfied. Here and there, for military or other reasons, a frontier followed a mountain range or perhaps a river, and a small national 'minority', as it was called, was then left on the wrong side. Or perhaps a nation which had no seaport of its own might insist on the use of a seaport which was largely inhabited by another nationality; or a nation, ambitious to recover its former glory, would claim a piece of territory that it had once possessed in ancient times. Thus the new map of Europe, however carefully drawn, had several 'danger spots' in it.

Then the peace-makers in Paris in 1919 sometimes found

it necessary to combine certain nationalities together. They could not divide Europe into a crazy patchwork so that every little people had its own little country to live in and its own little government to be ruled by. Such countries would have been too small even to support themselves. Many people have said that the Balkans, for example, were too much divided up, that the Balkan States were always quarrelling, and that it would be fatal to try to 'Balkanise' all Europe. So the peace-makers in Paris created nations like Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, each composed of groups of similar peoples welded together, and this the peace-makers had to do if they were to create nations that were 'going concerns', strong enough to stand alone.

The peace-makers imposed certain conditions on these smaller nations. For instance, they made them sign treaties undertaking to respect the rights and liberties of their minorities. Unfortunately the peace-makers imposed no economic conditions, and these nations shortly began to set up tariff barriers, ostensibly to protect their own industries. The result was a general restriction of trade. An area of Europe like the Middle Danube, which in the old days of the Austro-Hungarian Empire had been ruled as a single economic unit, with a single currency and free-trade throughout, was now divided into jealous little 'cells' in mutually ruinous competition with each other.

#### THE NEW CZECHOSLOVAKIA

The new Czechoslovakia is a good example of the difficulties of nation-building. The country consisted mainly of two nationalities—the Czechs and the Slovaks.

These two were nationalities of the same racial origin, and they spoke very much the same language. They ought to have made a happy combination. But many of the Czechs were industrial workers, whereas the Slovaks were peasants. In the old days of the Austro-Hungarian Empire the Czechs



THOMAS GARRIGUE MASARYK, First President of Czechoslovakia, 1918-1935.

had lived under the milder Austrian rule, whereas the Slovaks had lived under the much harsher Hungarian rule. The Czechs, on the whole, were better educated, of a higher standard of living, and of more independent character than the Slovaks. It was found that, when Czechoslovakia was first set up as an independent nation, the Slovaks were so poor and illiterate that many of the important positions in Slovakia—in the civil service, in education and in business—had to be given to Czechs.

Then in Czechoslovakia there was an important German minority, who lived mainly along the mountainous northern and western fringes of the country. They were called the Sudeten Germans, after their native Sudeten Mountains. Here was a case where the old historical frontier was retained instead of following the lines of nationality. The old frontier, in fact, was the natural one; but 3,000,000 Sudeten





EDUARD BENEŠ, Czechoslovakia's Foreign Minister, 1918-1935, and President, 1935-1938, 1945-1948.

Germans were left on the wrong side of it. There was a strong party among these Sudeten Germans who would have preferred to break away from Czechoslovakia altogether and to join their own kinsmen across the mountains in Germany. Czechs, Slovaks and Germans therefore did not always live happily together, and much of the politics of Czechoslovakia was taken up with their frictions and quarrels.

Thus Czechs, Slovaks and Germans quarrelled perhaps over elections to their parliament, or they quarrelled over their courts of law, or they quarrelled over religion, or they quarrelled over methods of teaching in their schools. There is always plenty to quarrel about if you are in a quarrelling mood, or if—as might happen—a third person has some advantage to gain from your quarrelling. We shall hear more about these Sudeten Germans at a later date.

But for a time Czechoslovakia made a great success of her new nationhood. Her land was blessed with considerable natural wealth and an industrious, thrifty people. She built up a strong democracy, and she remained a democracy after many another of the new nations had lapsed into dictatorships. She had able leaders who enjoyed respect abroad. For many years Masaryk was her President, and Beneš her Foreign Secretary, and both were outstanding men with real elements of greatness. For a time at least Czechoslovakia was fortune's favourite in the New Europe,

and her unhappy collapse in 1938, through no fault of her own, has been one of the tragedies of our time.

#### THE NEW AUSTRIA

The new Austria had no minority problem, but she was a defeated nation, and the peace treaties had left her so small and weak that it was almost impossible for her to survive. The new Austria, in fact, was a good example of a nation that was too small and weak to stand alone, and she might have fared better in combination with her old partner, Hungary. One party in Austria would have preferred to see her joined to Germany, and there was often considerable agitation for a German-Austrian *Anschluss*, or union, as it was called. But the old imperial Austria had once been an oppressor of subject peoples, and it seemed to be in the best interests of the Allies, who had defeated her, to keep her weak, isolated and harmless.

Yet, knowing what we know now, we cannot blame Austria for her many failures during the inter-war period. Vienna, the Austrian capital, had once been the capital of the Austro-Hungarian Empire; it had been a proud, important, prosperous and very beautiful city. But Vienna now was like a head with only half a body, and that body was sick and wasted. We can imagine what would happen to London, for instance, if it had only the Home Counties to support it, with no British Commonwealth, and only a hostile Europe across the Channel to trade with. The former business of Vienna was almost gone, its citizens were reduced to poverty, and the new Austrian Government was often deeply in debt. Worse still, citizens in the city and the peasants in the country districts were in

perpetual feud. Austria made an effort to be a genuine, peaceful, democratic State. We shall describe elsewhere her helpless, hopeless, ignominious end.

#### THE NEW POLAND

Of all the new nations, Poland's problems were perhaps the most difficult, and we cannot help feeling that she made them even worse by her own ambition and temperament. Poland, in times past, had been a great, flourishing kingdom which had since declined in power. During the eighteenth century she had been 'partitioned' among her three neighbours of that day—Russia, Austria and Prussia—and had ceased to exist as an independent state. Up to 1914 the only 'Poland' to be seen in the maps of Europe was a province in westernmost Russia.

But now, in 1918, Poland's enemies had been defeated, and many patriotic Poles were dreaming great dreams that their country would be restored in all its ancient glory. Poland began her life anew at the end of 1918, after the collapse of Germany, with the most boundless ambitions.

By the Treaty of Versailles the new Poland received the Polish Corridor and part of Upper Silesia. As we said above\*, Danzig, formerly a German city, was made her main seaport on the Baltic; it was created a Free City under a separate constitution, supervised by the League of Nations, and Poland was given special privileges in Danzig harbour.

Poland's western frontiers were thus fixed, but to her east lay Russia, who in 1918 was in revolution, weak and defenceless, and almost inviting adventure and attack. Moreover, Poland was encouraged by France, who wanted

\* Page 55.

to make her a powerful future ally. Thus Poland in 1919 and 1920 made use of her liberation to fight her Battle of the Frontiers, as it was called, and to set about reconquering all the territories that had once been hers in the dim and distant past. Europe, which had just passed through the First World War and had hoped for the coming of peace, had now to watch while a suddenly war-like Poland started fighting a series of little wars with one after another of her neighbours.

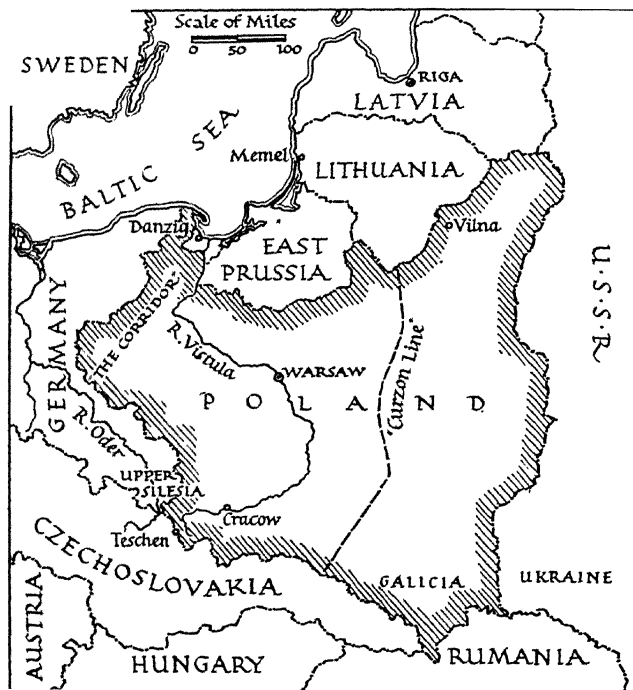


JOSEPH PILSUDSKI (Marshal), Polish soldier and statesman.

Poland's leader at this time, and the great inspirer of her Battle of the Frontiers, was Pilsudski. Pilsudski in his youth had been one of the heroes of Poland's anti-Russian activities. During the First World War, however, he came to lead Poland's campaign of resistance to Germany. In November, 1918, after the armistice, the liberated Poles made him their Chief of State.

In those restless years, 1919 and 1920, Polish armies fought in Galicia, in the Ukraine, in Czechoslovakia and in Lithuania. Finally Poland waged a full-scale war with Russia. More than once Britain and France tried to restrain her. They suggested that her eastern frontier towards Russia should be drawn along a line that came to be known as the Curzon Line, after Lord Curzon, the British Foreign Secretary of that time. But the Curzon Line was far from satisfying to Poland, and her eastern frontier was eventually fixed a good hundred miles beyond.

By 1923 the Battle of the Frontiers had swelled Poland to an area almost equal to that of Germany and had incorporated many peoples who were not Poles at all. Of a total of 30,000,000 in the new Poland, a full third consisted of minorities, mainly Russians, Ukrainians and Germans.



### POLAND 1920-1939

The new Poland of 1920 comprised 'the Corridor', formerly German, and territories east of 'the Curzon Line', largely inhabited by Russians. Danzig was created a Free City under the League of Nations.

And, in addition to all this, Poland had succeeded in making enemies, instead of friends, of all her neighbours.

Unfortunately the Poland which had accomplished this result was, by modern standards, not a rich country. She had succeeded because those she had attacked were weak, rather than because she herself was strong, and her position consequently was dangerous in the extreme. She had few developed industries, and her main resources lay in her agriculture. But her agricultural lands were largely owned by 'gentry'—a mere handful of her population—whose families often traced their descent back to the old aristocracy of the eighteenth century. The liberation of Poland in 1918, in fact, had not liberated her peasants, who were among the poorest and most backward in Europe.

Thus while Polish armies were fighting the Battle of the Frontiers—armies recruited, indeed, from these very peasants—Pilsudski and the Polish politicians at home were struggling with the difficult problem of agricultural poverty and the ownership of the land. Without going into the history of this struggle in any detail, we may say that the new Polish parliament was soon split into numerous parties, and the land question was never properly solved.

Polish politics after the First World War makes sad reading. In some ways it closely resembles that of Italy, which we are shortly to describe. Perhaps it was not surprising, therefore, when, in August, 1926, Pilsudski took it upon himself—much as Mussolini did in Italy—to seize power for himself, declare the country a dictatorship and try to rule the unruly politicians in the Polish parliament by sheer force. Certainly the great ideals of democracy and self-determination were not to be found in the new Poland.

## CHAPTER 6

### THE SEARCH FOR PEACE AND SECURITY

#### THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

THE League of Nations was a product of the Peace Conference of Paris. The idea was no new thing in the world. Philosophers of all ages had often pondered the great problem of everlasting peace among men and had tried to work out some organisation for securing it. The League of Nations did not originate with President Wilson, though certainly his devoted support brought it into being, and during the Peace Conference it was his constant concern.

The League was created 'to promote international co-operation and to achieve international peace and security'. It was to be the great congregation and meeting-place of nations. Its constitution was set out in a document called the Covenant, and this Covenant was made a part of the Treaty of Versailles and of each of the other peace treaties. The League itself was to consist of a Council—a sort of Cabinet—and an Assembly—a sort of parliament. There were attached to it various organisations such as the I.L.O., or International Labour Organisation. The League's first meetings were held in 1920.

The League's headquarters were at Geneva in Switzerland, where a fine building—the Palace of Nations—was erected for it. Forty-two nations were originally members; twenty-nine were Allied nations of the war, and thirteen were neutrals 'invited to accede'. In the beginning the main absentee was the United States of America, which, for reasons we shall elsewhere describe, had refused to ratify

the Treaty of Versailles and which, in spite of all President Wilson's influence and efforts, never subsequently joined the League.

There has been endless discussion over the League of Nations. Many critics said it was not strong enough. It depended too much on persuasion and agreement, and it had no real 'teeth' in it. The member nations of it promised not to go to war, they promised to reduce their armaments, they promised to submit their disputes to arbitration, they



THE PALACE OF THE NATIONS AT GENEVA  
Built as the headquarters of the League of Nations.

promised to support one another against an aggressor State, they promised to reconsider treaties which became dangerous or out-of-date. They promised this, and they promised that. But there was no compulsion, and everything seemed to rest upon the good faith of the parties. Then there was one Article in the Covenant which stated that certain decisions of the League must be made 'with the agreement of all the Members', and the result was that any one nation could often block the vote of the others. Finally, several important nations were not members, and the League did not become in fact what it was intended to be—a congregation of *all* nations. The United States, as



we have said, never joined; Germany did not join till 1926; Russia joined in 1934, just when Germany was withdrawing.

Though it is now a matter of history that the League failed to keep the peace of the world, the League in its day did accomplish a mass of work of the greatest importance. It settled several minor disputes which might otherwise have led to wars. It administered the Saar territory and the Free City of Danzig. It was particularly concerned with the rights of the various minorities in the new Europe. The International Labour Organisation brought about reforms all over the world in labour conditions, hours of work, sickness benefits, wages and public health. At the Hague in Holland a Permanent Court of International Justice, or World Court, was set up to hear special kinds of legal disputes between nations.

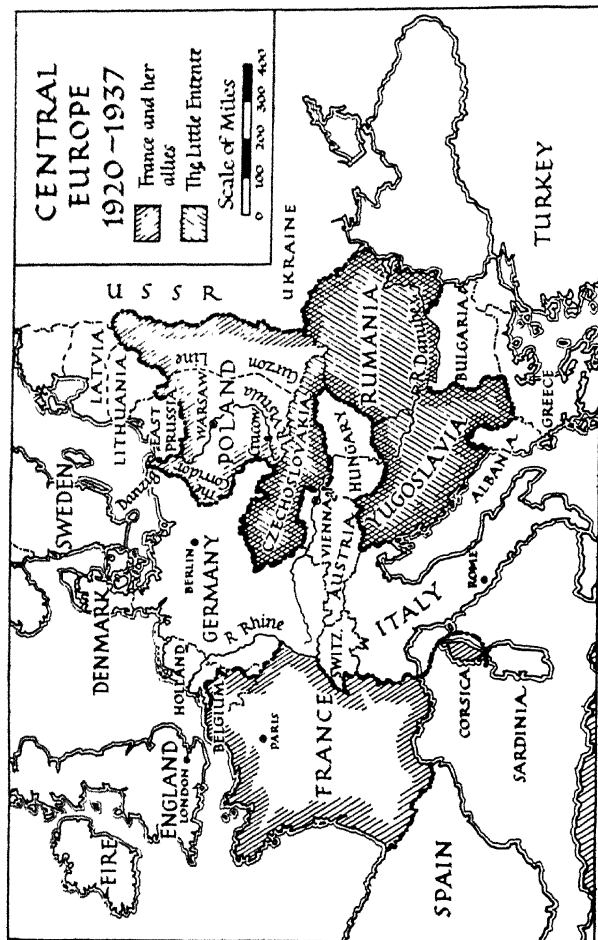
The League also kept a watchful eye on certain territories formerly belonging to Germany and Turkey. Under the peace treaties Germany's colonial possessions overseas and Turkey's possessions in Syria, Palestine and Mesopotamia were converted into 'Mandates' under League supervision. These were territories inhabited 'by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world', and more 'advanced nations' were called upon to act as Mandatory Powers, hold the territories in trust and govern them until such time as they might be considered ready for independence. Needless to say the Mandatory Powers were Britain, the British Dominions, France and Japan, who had fought for these territories and occupied them during the First World War. On the whole, the new mandate system worked very well, and it did avoid the old evils of colonial exploitation. Every

year the Mandatory Powers submitted to the Council of the League a full report on the condition of the lands and peoples thus placed in their charge.

#### FRANCE AND HER ALLIES IN EUROPE

It was in France that criticisms of the 'weakness' of the League were most often heard. The French are a logical people; they had never felt that a League of persuasion and promises, without military power behind it, would ever be of much value, especially against nations like Germany, which in the past had shown that the only thing they ever respected was force. Rather, the French wanted a League which would have been a sort of European General Staff with a strong international army under its command.

Consequently France, in 1919, was already casting about for some additional support for her own peace and security, and especially did she consider herself in need of support should her beaten enemy, Germany, ever again grow aggressive and strong. In fact, in the inter-war period, the whole of French foreign politics, with extraordinary relentlessness and singleness of purpose, was directed against Germany. Thus in 1919, during the Peace Conference of Paris, France obtained promises of assistance both from the United States and Britain against any future German attack, and treaties of assistance on these lines between France and the United States and Britain were signed at the same time as the Treaty of Versailles. The French people regarded these treaties of assistance as the very corner-stone of their security; but the United States afterwards went 'isolationist' and, as we shall tell elsewhere, tried to withdraw from all European 'entanglements'. The American Senate



Out of the First World War and the peace settlement emerged the new nations, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, and a much-expanded Rumania. France entered into alliances with all these states, and three of them, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Rumania, were separately allied together as the Little Entente.

never ratified the Treaty of Versailles, and the whole arrangement for France's security therefore came to nothing.

So France began to look to other nations for assistance, and she spent the years after the First World War patiently building up in Europe a system of alliances against Germany. She chose allies especially from among the new nations which the peace treaties had created—nations which, just because they were new, were interested in maintaining the 'Versailles order' that had brought them into existence. Thus France made an ally of the new Poland. In 1921 a Franco-Polish agreement was signed in Paris binding both nations to a common defence against aggression. A Franco-Polish commercial treaty followed, and from time to time important French loans were granted to Poland. French officers helped to train the Polish army.

The three nations, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Rumania, then banded together in a single block which came to be known as the Little Entente, and each of them was shortly allied to France. Thus France became the anchor to a chain of alliances throughout the new Europe—a chain which, it was felt, would for ever bind the German aggressor and prevent him from again disturbing the peace of the world.

Many friends of France often used to criticise her for these alliances, and especially for seeming to perpetuate in them the spirit of suspicion and hatred against Germany. Europe would never know real peace, they argued, if France tried to behave like a jailor and for ever keep Germany under constraint. But France felt she knew her old enemy best. Three times in a century and twice in living memory had she been invaded by that enemy. In

1918, after fearful loss, she was at last victorious, and never again must she show him weakness or mercy.

#### THE LOCARNO PACT

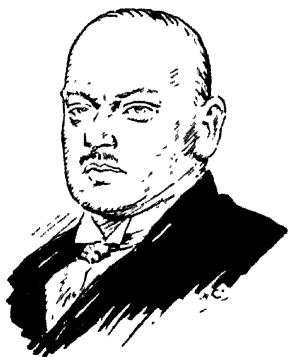
One of the misfortunes of the inter-war period was that France and Britain, in their approach to the bigger problems of peace, were so often opposed to one another. The two war-time allies seemed quite unable to continue their comradeship into the difficult post-war years. In contrast to France, Britain believed that Germany should be restored to an honourable place among the nations of the world. By nature the British people do not hate easily. They are ready to let bygones be bygones. Also Britain was a great commercial country which needed good customers like Germany to trade with. Consequently, in the meetings of the League of Nations, and in all the other international conferences that followed the First World War, the British representative was constantly putting forward the view that to keep Germany perpetually weak and suppressed was a wrong, dangerous and short-sighted policy, and that everything must be done to make her once more a self-respecting and prosperous nation.

In particular, Britain found it difficult to satisfy France's continual plaint over the weakness of the League and her continual demand for real security. France, as we said above, felt aggrieved that Britain had failed her in the matter of the treaty of assistance. She made repeated efforts to draw Britain into her alliance system in Europe.

During 1923 there was a serious crisis when, as we shall tell in the next chapter, Germany defaulted in her reparations and French troops marched into Germany's great

industrial area of the Ruhr to enforce payment. Britain strongly opposed France's high-handed action. But the crisis, when it was over, made one thing clear—France and Britain must come to terms over the persistent question of France's security.

Discussions between France and Britain over the new pact continued for another year. Finally in October 1925, three famous Foreign Ministers—



GUSTAV STRESEMANN, German Foreign Minister, 1923-1929.

Briand for France, Austen Chamberlain for Britain and Stresemann for Germany met together in conference in the Swiss town of Locarno on Lake Maggiore, and there produced a series of treaties which became known as the Locarno Pact. Mussolini, the Italian dictator, attended the later phases of the conference. By these treaties France, Britain, Italy and Germany declared it their solemn intention 'to seek by common agreement means for preserving their respective nations from the scourge of war'. They 'guaranteed' the frontiers between France, Germany and Belgium, and Germany re-affirmed the clause in the Treaty of Versailles which forbade her fortifying or keeping armed forces in the Rhineland. France and Germany pledged themselves 'in no case to attack or to invade each other or to resort to war against each other'. France's allies, Poland and Czechoslovakia, who attended the conference, gave certain guarantees of their



SIR AUSTEN CHAMBER-  
LAIN, British Foreign  
Secretary, 1924-1929.

own. Britain and France also agreed to begin the evacuation of the Rhineland.

The Locarno Pact made a tremendous impression at the time. The meetings of the three Foreign Ministers had been very cordial, and all three had seemed deeply resolved that a just and lasting settlement must be reached. On his return to England Austen Chamberlain declared that the Pact marked 'the real dividing line between the years of war and the years of peace'. It really looked as if the wicked days of the First World War and all those tragic post-war incidents and quarrels like that over the Ruhr were at an end. A tired world began to breathe freely at last, to take heart and feel a new hope in the future. The relief was reflected in a general improvement of trade everywhere. In the five years after Locarno, from 1925 to 1930—the Locarno Era, as they have sometimes been called—the nations seemed to have turned the corner and entered upon an era of genuine peace. In 1926 Germany became a member of the League of Nations.

#### THE PACT OF PARIS

One more peace pact needs to be mentioned here—the Pact of Paris, signed in 1928. It was largely an American-inspired pact. About that time there had been a great deal of discussion in the United States about 'the outlawry of war'. The American newspapers and magazines were full of the topic; it was much debated at public meetings throughout the country; it soon became a

popular slogan. Perhaps no one was very clear what 'the outlawry of war' really meant, but it seemed to mean that going to war was an unlawful act and that the peaceful nations were then within their rights to send the offender 'to Coventry', so to speak—unworthy to be counted as one of their family. No one suggested that the outlawed nation should be resisted or punished by force of arms. Somehow or other it was believed that the mere threat of outlawing a nation that tried to go to war would give that nation pause.

Consequently, on April 6, 1927—the tenth anniversary of America's entry into the First World War—Briand, the French Foreign Minister, proposed that France and the United States should mark the occasion by signing a pact for ever outlawing war between themselves. Briand was clearly paying America a pretty compliment, and perhaps he thought that other nations would follow the example of France and the United States and that dozens of similar pacts would be signed. Briand's proposal met with a tremendous response from the American people. Not many months passed before Kellogg, the American Secretary of State, was declaring for a world-wide pact binding all nations, great and small, 'to renounce war as an instrument of national policy', and all America was enthusiastically supporting his plan.

In the end fifteen nations met with great ceremony in Paris in August, 1928—in fact, all the Great Powers with the exception of Russia—and



ARISTIDE BRIAND, several times French Premier and Foreign Minister.



there signed a General Treaty for the Renunciation of War—the Pact of Paris, or the Briand-Kellogg Pact, as it was afterwards called. Sixty-five nations, including Russia, subsequently accepted the Pact.

#### THE FAILURE OF DISARMAMENT

President Wilson, in his Fourteen Points, had called for disarmament, and the Covenant of the League of Nations, in much the same language, had required of its members ‘the reduction of national armaments to the lowest point consistent with national safety’.

Armaments, said everyone in those days, were wasteful of money and labour which might have been better spent in other, more beneficial ways; they did not secure peace—on the contrary, as they had done in 1914, they led to ‘armament races’, to mutual suspicion and fear between nations, and thence to actual war; and in an age of scientific progress they were becoming so destructive that they might well threaten our very civilisation with extinction. In a modern war even the victors stood to lose more than they gained. And the moral and psychological effects, with all the shortages, controls and restrictions, with all the interference with normal life and all the exhaustion of nervous energy which modern ‘total’ war entailed, were perhaps more ruinous and far-reaching than the actual destruction of lives and property. Something surely must be done, said everyone in those days, to limit the terrible weapons with which men now fought, and so, if possible, prevent another 1914 from ever happening again.

Some headway was made in naval disarmament. In 1921 President Harding of the United States called a conference

at Washington of nine nations to discuss a settlement of their mutual affairs in the Pacific Ocean. Five of the nine nations—the United States, Britain, Japan, France and Italy—were the principal naval Powers of the world. The conference resolved that certain of their warships should be scrapped, and agreed upon the numbers and sizes of the bigger warships that the five Powers should be allowed to keep.

Naval disarmament was comparatively simple. The disarmament of armies on land proved to be a much more prickly problem. It was often insuperably difficult for a nation to define exactly what degree of armament was 'consistent with national safety', for national safety depended on so many factors. Some nations—for example, Canada—with no special enemies near them, hardly needed armaments at all. Other nations—like Hungary or Poland—were surrounded by possible enemies. France in particular always demanded strong armaments for fear of Germany. Almost every nation had some special need or requirement to meet. Claims and counter-claims, arguments and counter-arguments were unending.

One of the tasks of the League of Nations was to be disarmament, and the League eventually set up various committees to consider the question. There was a Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference which met in Geneva in 1926, and the Disarmament Conference itself was afterwards called together in Geneva in 1932. We may wonder to-day if all these complicated talks ever had any chance of success. At the time it always seemed that France—in spite of the Locarno Pact and the Pact of Paris and all her alliances in Europe—was still the stumbling-

block, with her perpetual fears of Germany and her perpetual pleas for security. But in 1933 Hitler came to power in Germany, and by then it was known that secret German rearmament was already in progress. France's fears, it appeared, were perhaps not so mistaken after all. In October, 1933, as we shall tell in a later chapter, Hitler announced that Germany would withdraw from the Disarmament Conference, and the Conference was finally adjourned with none of its tasks completed.

The failure of disarmament after the First World War is a sad story. But disarmament to-day, after the Second World War, is still a desperate, urgent question, for which, more than ever before, it is necessary to find some solution.

## CHAPTER 7

### REPUBLICAN GERMANY

#### THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC

THE revolution which swept across Germany after the armistice in 1918 was not in fact a very violent affair. In after-years many people said it was hardly a revolution at all. But for some weeks it had looked as if it might follow the extreme form of the revolution in Russia. There was dangerous rioting in Berlin in January, 1919. An independent Socialist Republic for a time was declared in Munich. The German people were in terrible distress. Their defeat had left them broken-spirited and uncertain of the future. Nearly 2,000,000 of their men had been killed in the war.

Starvation in the bigger German cities was worse in the winter of 1918-1919 than at any time during the four years of the war-time blockade. The population as a whole was said to be 20 per cent. under weight.

The world had therefore good reason to be pleasantly and hopefully surprised when in January, 1919, the German people held a perfectly orderly election for their new parliament—the National Assembly, as it was first called—and returned at the head of the poll a strong block of Social Democrats, a party resembling the Labour Party in England, pledged to democracy and to non-violent methods. As there was still too much unrest in Berlin, the National Assembly met for some weeks at Weimar, the one-time home of Germany's greatest poet, Goethe, and there drew up a straightforward, democratic constitution which became known as the Weimar Constitution. "The German Reich is a Republic"—so ran the wording of Article I of the Constitution—"Constitutional power proceeds from the people." Ebert, himself a Social Democrat and a working man, was the first President.

Yet, despite these brave beginnings, it was doubtful if much in Germany had really changed. The Kaiser and many of the lesser German princelings were, it is true, in exile. The army had returned home and was demobilising, vast

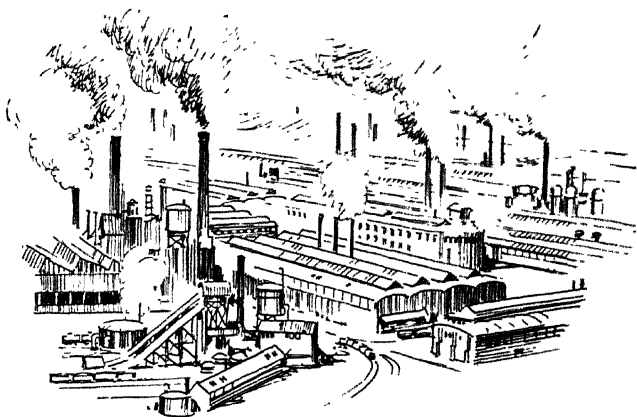


FRIEDRICH EBERT, First President of the German Republic, 1919-1925.

quantities of arms had been surrendered to the Allies. The old military Germany, which had fought the war and threatened the world, had to all appearances gone. But President Ebert and his Social Democrats were really very weak. They had to use the old German civil service to staff the Government offices, and the old civil service, efficient though it was, was a proud caste always harking back rather too fondly to the good old days when the Kaiser ruled in Berlin. Worse still, President Ebert had to call on the remaining army generals whenever his Government wanted to suppress any outbreak of rioting. Both the civil service and the generals knew perfectly well that the National Assembly was completely dependent on them, and the new German Republic had thus to rely on the support of some of the most conservative elements in the country.

Under the Treaty of Versailles the German army was to be reduced to 100,000 men. But it is now certain that the German army was never reduced to that number. The Control Commissions which the Allies sent to Germany to see that the terms of the treaty were properly carried out were quite unable to discover how many armed men there actually were in Germany, and the German generals used all sorts of tricks for misleading them. Then irregular gangs of rowdies started up—soldiers who refused to demobilise and hid their arms, and who often drilled and paraded quite openly. Such were the various Free Corps, as they were called, often recruited in support of some political party. Unhappily, many of the generals encouraged the Free Corps, and German magistrates were always lenient to Free Corps troopers whenever they were brought into

the courts on charges of violence or for the illegal possession of arms. In March, 1920, one of these Free Corps, under the leadership of a certain Dr. Kapp, tried to set up a government in Berlin. Hitler's Brown Shirts, who made their appearance in Munich in 1921, at first were just another such gang of part-time soldiers.



GERMAN WAR FACTORIES AT ESSEN

The city of Essen in the Ruhr was one of Germany's great arsenals and the centre of the Krupp's munitions industry.

The National Assembly was also weak because, in the eyes of the German people, it seemed to bear responsibility for all the humiliation of the peace. One of its first duties, in fact, had been to send delegates to sign the Treaty of Versailles. Only with the greatest difficulty was the National Assembly afterwards persuaded to ratify the treaty. The loss of territory was a bitter blow, especially the loss of Upper Silesia and the Polish Corridor. The



Under the Treaty of Versailles in 1919 Germany ceded Alsace-Lorraine to France, Eupen-Malmédy to Belgium and the Corridor to Poland. Plebiscites afterwards awarded part of Schleswig to Denmark and part of Upper Silesia to Poland. The Lithuanians took Memel. The Saar and its coal-fields were temporarily occupied by France, and the Rhineland was demilitarized.

Germans also had little faith in the new League of Nations, the Covenant of which was, in fact, a part of the treaty, and which was therefore connected in their minds with the disgrace of their defeat in 1918. But the severest and most shameful terms of the treaty, they always considered, were those dealing with reparations.

## THE TANGLE OF REPARATIONS

“Germany accepts the responsibility for causing all the loss and the damage to which the Allied and Associated Governments and their nationals have been subjected as a consequence of the war imposed upon them by the aggression of Germany and her Allies.” So ran in part the wording of the reparations terms of the Treaty of Versailles. But the peace-makers of Paris could not agree as to the amount of the loss and damage for which Germany was now to make payment. Some of their first estimates had varied from £2,000,000,000 to £20,000,000,000. Clearly any fair kind of reparations would mean a long investigation; all sorts of people whose homes and businesses had been in the war-devastated areas would have to put in their claims for damages. Allied Governments even wanted to make Germany liable for pensions to their disabled soldiers. In the end the peace-makers had set up a Reparation Commission, with headquarters in Paris, which would hear all the claims and decide on final reparation figures and methods of payment.

Germany, of course, tried to evade payment. According to the German argument, it was not that reparations were just or unjust, so much as that Germany was so ruined by her losses during the war that payment was a practical impossibility. In other words, she had nothing to pay reparations with. And the facts appeared quickly enough to be supporting the German argument. If the reparations terms were imposed by force, Germany indeed might never recover from her losses incurred during the war, and in the end no reparations at all would be paid.



So began more than ten years of sordid squabbling and haggling. In January, 1921, the Allies officially put Germany's total reparations bill at about £10,000,000,000; in May, 1921, the bill was already being reduced to about £6,000,000,000; and therefore, at almost every international conference at which reparations were discussed the figure was cut down a little more. At the same time, giving as her excuse that she must build up her exhausted industries, Germany was borrowing huge sums of money from abroad. Most of this money reached her in the form of private loans—that is, it was lent to her, as an ordinary business deal, by banks, often American banks. Germany, it was thought in those days, offered a safe and profitable investment. But it so happened that Germany was soon borrowing in loans more than she was paying in reparations.

It is still difficult to say how much of all this was the result of deliberate design on the part of Germany, and how much was due to a misunderstanding, by everyone concerned, of the complex financial problems involved. Certainly Germany showed no 'willingness' to pay, and she tried to be as obstructive as she could. But never before in history had nations dealt in such huge sums of money, and no one had clearly foreseen what the result would be every time an instalment of reparations amounting to many millions was paid over.

#### INFLATION AND THE RUHR CRISIS

One curious and unforeseen result of reparations was that money in Germany lost its value. What happened was that each time a reparations instalment was paid the German Government tried to make up the amount at home, partly

out of Government revenues, but mostly by printing bank-notes, and the country was soon being flooded by worthless bank-notes. Economists give the name of 'inflation' to such a state of affairs.

In 1920, for example, a loaf of bread in Germany might cost one mark, in 1921 it might cost, say, five or six marks. By 1922 it might cost twenty or fifty or even hundreds of marks. A German worker receiving his weekly wage never knew how much he could buy with it. His wife went out to make her daily purchases with a whole basketful of worthless notes, and the potatoes or sausages she wanted might even increase in price as she stood waiting in the shopping queue! In 1923 a German had to spend literally millions of marks to buy a glass of beer or a postage stamp. It is important to realise what this meant. 'Paper' money—that is, bank balances, savings, insurance—just disappeared. One German Chancellor after another tried to cope with the situation. Inflation was like a panic which, once started, no one seemed able to stop.

Meanwhile the French Government was getting impatient. By agreement among the Allies, France, because of the serious devastation she had suffered, was to receive half Germany's reparations. She needed the money for her reconstruction programme, and she was determined to get it. Her Premier in 1922 was Poincaré, a bitter hater of Germany, and Poincaré was one of those who always believed that the inflation in Germany was another piece of



A German inflation postage stamp of 1923, surcharged 50 milliards of marks.

German trickery intended to cheat France of her rightful dues.

In January, 1923, the Reparation Commission reported that Germany was defaulting on her payments. As we saw



PHILIPP SCHEIDEMANN,  
German Social Democrat  
leader, proclaimed Germany  
a Republic on November 9,  
1918.

in Chapter 6\*, French troops invaded Germany's big coalfields in the Ruhr Valley, intending to seize for themselves what Germany refused to pay. Belgian and Italian troops marched with the French, but the British took no part in the invasion. The French at once set about managing the coal-mines, iron-works and railways of the district; they deported German workers who resisted them and imprisoned

factory directors and town mayors. Germany tried to retaliate by means of a passive resistance campaign. German workers refused to work; German postmen even refused to collect or deliver letters; German shopkeepers refused to serve French customers. Germany held out in this way for eighteen months, but the passive resistance campaign almost brought her to the point of national ruin. In August, 1923, President Ebert appointed a new Chancellor, Stresemann, who advised complete surrender to the French demands.

But the settlement did not come at once. No sooner was the Ruhr crisis ended than disturbances broke out in many parts of Germany. A number of 'quislings', as we should now call them, aided by French intrigue, tried to set up a Rhineland Republic, independent of the rest of

\* Pages 72-73.

Germany. There was a minor workers' 'revolution' in Hamburg. In Munich a wild political agitator, called Adolf Hitler, tried to set up a government of his own; during street fighting in Munich several of his troopers were killed, and he himself was arrested and was afterwards sentenced to a year's imprisonment. It seemed as if Germany was being torn in two directions. Moderate men, like Stresemann, were trying to come to terms with the Allies, while the hot-heads in many parts of the country were ruining the prospects of any real and lasting peace.

#### THE STRESEMANN ERA

Stresemann was one of the most remarkable men Germany produced in the inter-war period. He did not remain Chancellor long—he stayed in the German Cabinet as Foreign Secretary—but practically every event of importance that happened in Germany between 1923 and his death in 1929 took place under his guidance. He found Germany in the midst of a fearful crisis; he left her six years later comparatively prosperous and at peace with the world. In 1924 he met the Allies in a conference which discussed the whole reparations question, and the conference drew up a plan for the proper regulation of reparations payments—the Dawes Plan, so called after the American General Dawes, who was chairman of the principal experts' committee at the conference. Stresemann caused to be issued a new mark, the Reichsmark, to take the place of the old mark, which had now lost its value. In 1925 he attended the Locarno Conference and helped to draw up the famous Locarno Pact, which we mentioned in the previous

chapter \*. In 1926 Germany was admitted to the League of Nations. All these things were very great achievements, and all of them were largely Stresemann's work. It surprised—and alarmed—many people to see Germany in these years make so rapid and so remarkable a recovery from her desperate plight in 1923.

Not only was Germany recovering, but the character of her Government was now somewhat different from what it had been just after the war. In 1919 the German Cabinet had been largely Social Democrat, but every time the Cabinet changed or a new election was held it became more conservative. The peace-loving, democratic spirit of the original Weimar Constitution was gradually lost. Stresemann himself was the leader of the People's Party, mainly made up of big, wealthy manufacturers. In February, 1925, President Ebert died, and Field-Marshal von Hindenburg, Germany's war-time hero, was elected President in his place. The German people were disappointed and embittered by the Allies' treatment of them since Versailles, and they expressed their feelings at this time by becoming more and more 'reactionary'. And then the election of President von Hindenburg showed unmistakably that the old military spirit in Germany was far from dead. Nor is it now so certain that Stresemann himself was genuinely the man of peace he was taken to be.

But what the future held for Germany we must tell in a later chapter.

\* Pages 72-74.

## CHAPTER 8

### SOVIET RUSSIA

#### REVOLUTION AND COUNTER-REVOLUTION

THE first phase of the Russian Revolution, as we said in Chapter 3\*, broke out in March, 1917, and was followed in November, 1917, by the second more extreme Bolshevik phase. Russia signed peace with her enemies of the First World War at Brest-Litovsk in March, 1918. German and Austrian forces afterwards occupied large areas of southern Russian in search of grain, until, under the armistice of November, 1918, they were all compelled to return to their homes. It looked at that time as if Russia would be left alone with her Bolshevik revolution to work out her destiny by herself as best she might.

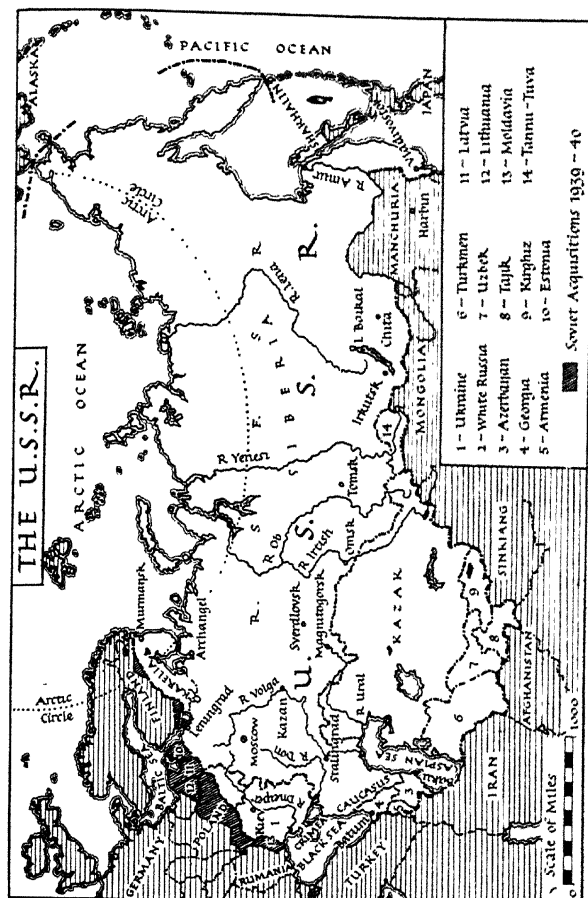
But Russia was not to be left alone. Weakened by a disastrous war and in the midst of revolution, she was easy prey for all manner of adventurers, both within and without her borders. Former Russian industrialists and landowners, whom the revolution had stripped of wealth and power and had driven abroad, were making every effort to find their way back to their old homes and properties. Some of these men—White Russians as they were called—were in Paris at the time of the Peace Conference, and were busily intriguing to influence the peace-makers in their favour. Others of them who had remained in Russia were coming out of hiding to form themselves into armies, often under the leadership of old Tsarist army generals, and to fight against the Bolshevik Government. The Allies,

\* Pages 38-41.

especially France and England, in their fear that Bolshevism might spread to other countries outside Russia and start up Communist revolutions all over Europe, began to send these White Russian armies shiploads of munitions and other war supplies.

In 1919, at the time of the Peace Conference of Paris, the Bolsheviks in Russia were being attacked from almost every direction, and were being virtually hemmed into a central area round Moscow and Petrograd. One White army advanced against them from Siberia, another from the Caucasus, and another from Estonia. Allied forces occupied parts of Russia to watch over special Allied interests. There were British troops in the far north at Archangel and Murmansk, and in the south at Baku; there were French troops at Odessa on the Black Sea; there were Czechs stationed all along the Trans-Siberian Railway; there were Japanese and Americans in eastern Siberia. In 1920 the Poles invaded Russia\*. These events are sometimes known as the Russian Counter-Revolution and sometimes as the Russian Civil War.

But the White armies failed everywhere. Possibly they were not as strong as they had seemed at first. They followed no united plan. They launched their attacks disconnectedly one after another. As they pushed into the heart of Russia they lost touch with their sea-ports, and thence with their bases for Allied munitions. They nowhere gained the support of the Russian peasants in the districts they occupied. Some of their leaders were sincere and honest soldiers fighting for what they believed; others were out for what they could get. The Allies who



Soviet Acquisitions 1939-40

Scale of Miles

The U.S.S.R., the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, covers one sixth of the land surface of the world. Under the Soviet Constitution of 1936 it comprised eleven 'Constituent Republics'—namely: Russia (R.S.F.S.R.), the Ukraine, White Russia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia, Turkmen, Uzbek, Tajik, Kazak and Kirghiz. Since then five more have been added—Karelia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Moldavia.



supplied them were not united among themselves and hardly knew what to do with the Russian problem.

The Bolsheviks gradually organised their own forces, built up their Red Army, and were soon more than a match



LEON TROTSKY, Russian revolutionary leader, Soviet Commissar for War, 1918-1923.

for the White invaders. A miserable, ragged army it must have been at first, but it was fired with an unquenchable spirit, deeply resolved that the revolution should not suffer defeat. Trotsky, it is believed, was the great hero of the Bolshevik resistance, and proved himself a veritable genius of military organisation. Under his control the manu-

facture of munitions and supplies in Russia was made into a great state monopoly. The fighting was long and heavy, but by the end of 1920 the counter-revolution was decisively beaten. Except for a few Japanese in far eastern Siberia, who remained there till 1922, Russia was free of her many invaders.

It is difficult for us to imagine the condition of Russia at this time. She had been at war for three years; she had then passed through two revolutions and a counter-revolution. Huge areas of land were laid waste; homes and villages were derelict; cattle and horses had been slaughtered. Thousands of deserters were wandering about the scorched, devastated country. Russian industries, except those which Trotsky had kept alive for muni-

tions, were at a standstill. Many of the workers of Moscow and Petrograd, rather than face starvation in the streets, were foraging the country wherever food was rumoured to be found. And, as if Russia's sufferings had not been enough, the year 1921 was a famine year. Drought destroyed the crops throughout the rich 'black-earth' areas of the Volga and the Don. But Russia endured, and her revolutionary Government endured with her. Whatever we may think of the Bolshevik doctrines, we cannot but admire the tenacity with which Russia fought the battle for survival in these years.

#### THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT

What was this Government which had thus endured these storms and disasters? It was often called the Soviet Government, and the new Russia was called Soviet Russia. 'Soviet' is the Russian word for a council or committee. During the earlier phase of the revolution in 1917 it was found that the Russian peasants, workers and soldiers were forming themselves into such soviets. Each farm or factory or regiment was electing its particular soviet to manage its affairs. This was a perfectly natural thing to have happened. Whenever all the usual forms of law and order disappear—as they may do in revolutionary times—men will always form themselves into bands of some sort for comradeship and self-defence.

When Lenin, the great Russian revolutionary leader, arrived in Russia from exile in April, 1917, he found these soviets already in existence, and he determined that they should be made the basis of his future government for all Russia. It was to be quite a different kind of government



LENIN, Russian revolution-  
ary leader, founder of the  
U.S.S.R.

from that of the usual democracy we know in other parts of the world. For instance, in Britain we have a parliament whose members are elected direct by the voters, and each member represents a definite constituency. But in Russia the smaller soviets all over the country were now each to send a representative to a larger soviet, and the larger soviets were each to send a representative to a still larger soviet above it, and so on. The system, of course, took time to work out, but in its final form it was a sort of pyramid of soviets, rising up one above the other and crowned at the top by the great Congress of Soviets in Moscow itself.

Lenin realised that the soviet system was awkward and clumsy, but it was a natural growth. It seemed to him more practical to make use of a system that was developing of itself than to try to create the usual parliamentary democracy, which was perhaps not suited to the Russian character and which might never function at a time of confusion and distress. But in Lenin's view the real power behind the soviet system, the power which was to give it life and make it work, was the Communist Party. Here, if we are to understand the situation, we must look back a few years.

#### THE COMMUNIST PARTY

The Communist Party had originally been founded in Russia in 1898, and Lenin was already its acknowledged

leader. It carried on its work 'underground', as we should say to-day, and it was made up of a number of 'professional revolutionaries', men who lived by conspiracy against the hated Tsarist Government\*, who plotted and killed, who were hunted and suffered martyrdom for their cause. In 1903 the Communist Party held a meeting in London—it was not then safe for it to meet in Russia—and split into two factions, a more extreme and violent majority or Bolshevik faction, and a more moderate or Menshevik faction.

In 1917 the Bolsheviks, under Lenin's driving leadership, were the real force behind the second or Bolshevik phase of the revolution. The Bolsheviks were then some 200,000 strong, scattered over the length and breadth of Russia, and these men, long accustomed to violence, fanatical believers in their revolutionary teaching, now seized control of affairs. In particular they joined in the meetings of the new soviets everywhere, influenced their decisions, and got themselves elected to all the important positions in them. They took charge of the Government offices, the police and the army. They ran the factories and railways. They organised a secret police—the Cheka or, as it was afterwards called, the OGPU. At a time when the country was in terrible confusion, power would inevitably fall to a group of men who were highly organised, completely ruthless, who knew what they wanted and exactly how to get it. To all appearances the soviets were ruling Russia, but the real power in the land was the Central Committee of the Communist Party. From 1922 onwards the Secretary of the Party was Joseph Stalin.

In all this the Communist Party had not acted blindly,



**JOSEPH STALIN**, Russian revolutionary leader, Secretary of the Communist Party, later Marshal and Generalissimo of the U.S.S.R.

but according to a very definite doctrine, a doctrine we call Communism, originally derived years earlier from the German philosopher and economist, Karl Marx. The Communists' fundamental belief was the 'class struggle'. They believed that, everywhere in the world and at all times in past history, the rich have oppressed the poor, the strong have oppressed

the weak, the master has oppressed the servant, the lord has oppressed the peasant, the manufacturer has oppressed the working man. If, therefore, oppression in the world is to be removed and the class struggle is to be ended for ever, power must be given to the weakest and lowest of the classes, who have always been oppressed and who themselves have never oppressed anyone. This class—the proletariat—must not only rule, but must eventually destroy every other class in society. The true and only revolution, said the Communists, therefore, is 'the dictatorship of the proletariat'.

But, furthermore, said the Communists, the proletariat, because of its long, unhappy oppression, is the most ignorant class and the one least fitted to rule, and, until it has become politically educated and able to bear the responsibility of government, it must be taught and guided by men specially trained for that purpose. Clearly the members of the Communist Party were the ones to do that teaching and

guiding. Then when ignorance has disappeared and education has accomplished its work, the Party and the Party's many controls—the secret police, the spies and informers, the prisons and exiles—could be safely removed. At that blessed moment government itself would no longer be necessary, the very State would ‘wither away’, and all men would become the free and happy citizens of a classless society. But the great danger, which the Communists never foresaw, was that the Party might itself become a new ruling class with vices as bad as those of the old ruling class; it would become a class as jealous and as avid for power as any in the wicked Tsarist past.

#### THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL

All great historical doctrines have tried to conquer the world. If a man believes a thing deeply enough he will want and expect all men to believe it also. President Wilson wanted to make the world—the whole world—safe for democracy; and democracy for all nations, big and small, young and old, had been one of the inspiring purposes of the peace-makers in Paris. And likewise did many Communists think that their particular faith must soon spread everywhere.

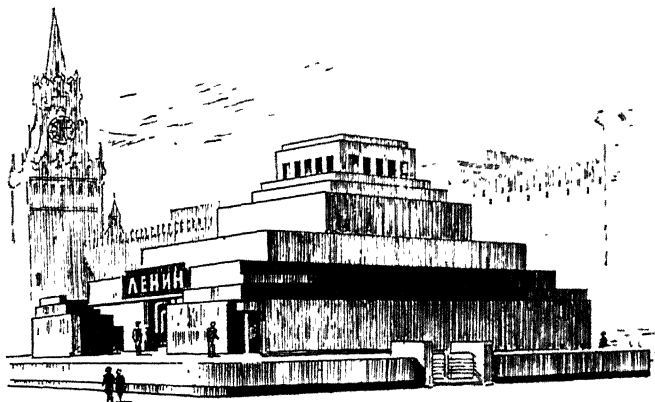
Trotsky was one who believed in a world-wide Communist revolution—permanent revolution, as he called it. Within certain practical limits Lenin was of that view also. But Lenin did not expect, as Trotsky apparently did, that it was only a matter of time before the nations of the world would go Communist of their own accord. Lenin saw strong conservative, counter-revolutionary forces against him which he knew would fight to the bitter end.

Lenin therefore set up an organisation—the Third (Communist) International, or Comintern, as it came to be called—whose business it would be to foment revolution in other countries. The Third International was so named after the two other international working-men's organisations, the First and Second Internationals, which had existed in Europe in the years before the First World War. But this Third International was to be a very special sort of International. It was to be a revolutionary headquarters staff, with offices at Moscow, which would keep in touch with Communist parties abroad, supply them with propaganda and money and give them regular and unified instructions.

Lenin founded the Third International in Moscow in March, 1919, and soon its secret influence was being felt in Germany and most European countries, and in India, China and the Americas. Its influence was very slight in Britain, where the Labour Party has always refused to be affiliated in any way with it. But the fear of the mysterious, sinister power which the Third International was supposed to wield was one of the reasons for the deep suspicion of Soviet Russia in so many countries.

#### THE NEP AND THE DEATH OF LENIN

Russia's urgent need after the defeat of the counter-revolution was that she should be allowed to recover. In 1921, while the great famine of that year was raging, Lenin introduced his New Economic Policy, or NEP, which removed Trotsky's war-time state monopoly, set up markets and allowed money to circulate freely once more. In many ways the NEP was like any other decontrol that



THE LENIN MAUSOLEUM

In this Mausoleum, beneath the Kremlin walls in Moscow, lies Lenin's body. The Mausoleum is visited by many thousands of devoted Soviet citizens every year.

follows a great war. Some Communists—Trotsky, of course, being one—strongly opposed the NEP, which they said was like a return to the old-time trading and marketing methods of pre-revolutionary days and contrary to the true Communist teaching. But Lenin overruled them. Russia, he said, had to have a breathing-space, and for some years NEP did give her a fairly free and peaceful interval.

At the same time Lenin proposed, and began to carry out, great schemes for developing the resources of Russia, and one scheme especially dear to his heart was an electrical network, not unlike our 'grid' in England, but on a much vaster scale. But in January, 1924, Lenin died, and the completion of his work for Russia was left to other hands.

Whether we admire Lenin's philosophy or not, we must admit that he was one of the giants of his era. Dictator he



certainly was, but a dictator who laboured selflessly, according to his lights, for the good of his cause and country. He led a people of many millions through revolution and counter-revolution, famine and near economic collapse, and he founded a State whose influence the world will feel for all time. He had no ambition for himself; he seized power because he could not do what he had to do without it. He was cruel and ruthless, but only when he felt cruelty and ruthlessness could not be avoided. His personal life was simple and homely; he amassed no wealth; he hated airs and attitudes. It was typical of him, for instance—but how unlike other dictators of our times—that he never wore a military uniform or decoration.

After his death he became a legendary figure. His body was embalmed and laid in a glass-topped coffin in a monument near the Kremlin in Moscow. Many towns and cities in Russia were named after him. The name of Petrograd was changed to Leningrad. To-day in Russia his portrait is to be seen everywhere and is almost worshipped by the devoted Russian people.

#### THE RISE OF STALIN

On Lenin's death it was generally expected that Trotsky, who had been his close partner in so many things, would be his successor. But without Lenin's strong support Trotsky was curiously weak and lost. Trotsky's was a restless temperament, and suffering Russia now wanted nothing so much as someone who could give her a few years of peace and quiet. Russia was tired of wars, and had no sympathy for Trotsky's wild theories of world revolution.

A long struggle for power in Russia ensued, largely

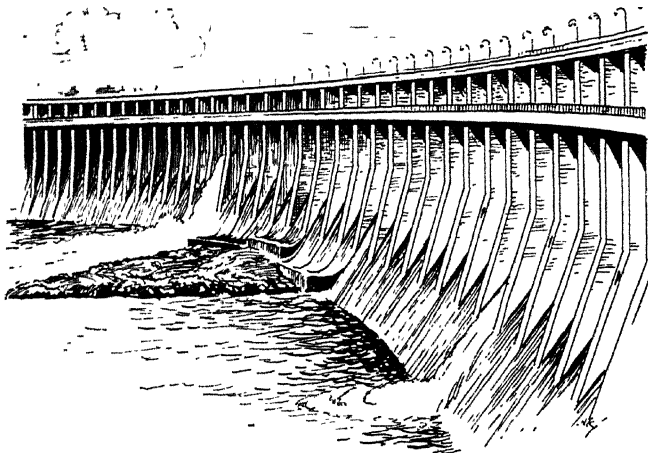
fought out behind closed doors, and in the end it was not Trotsky, but Stalin, the Secretary of the Communist Party, who emerged victorious. Joseph Stalin was born in the Caucasian State of Georgia. He was once a 'professional revolutionary' like the other old Bolsheviks. Hard experience had made him cunning and secretive, and he had little of the intellectual brilliance of Lenin or Trotsky. His strength was in his infinite courage and tenacity. He took no interest in Trotsky's world revolution, and, instead, came before the Russian people with the more restrained watchword of 'Socialism in one country'. The fervours of the early revolution, indeed, were already cooling, and the exhausted Russian people wanted no more adventures. And Stalin made it his business to give the Russian people what they wanted.

#### THE FIVE-YEAR PLANS

For the time being Stalin allowed Russia's recovery to take its own course. In other words, he did not interfere with Lenin's NEP. But he soon realised that, if Russia was to make full use of her immense natural resources, something more than the NEP would be wanted. Russia's greatness must be planned.

Stalin was already much impressed by the planning which Lenin had begun, especially Lenin's electrical network, and he resolved that the whole of the country's industry and agriculture must be planned similarly. Stalin found Russia in 1924 a war-torn, impoverished and backward land; he determined to make her a second America, a home of the most modern science and machinery, of vast factories and tractor-tilled fields.

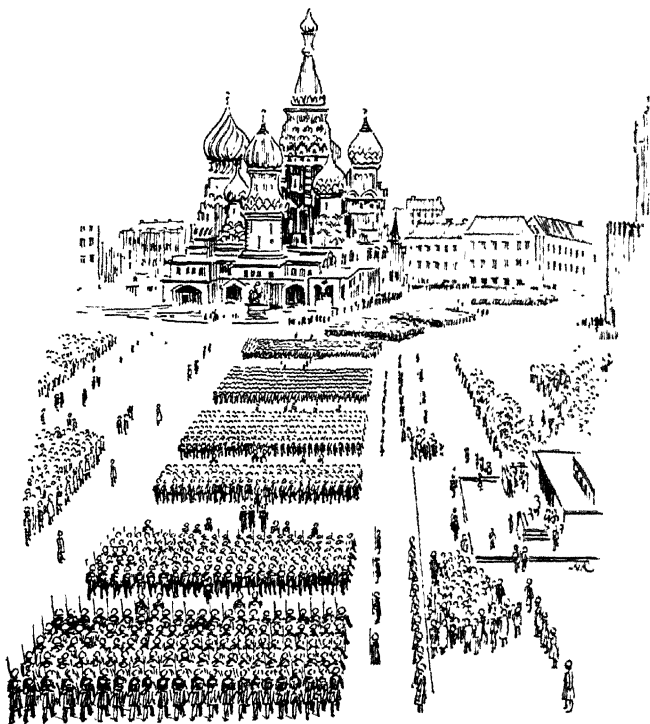
In all, Stalin inaugurated three Five-Year Plans—the first in 1928, the second in 1933 and the third in 1938. The Plans dealt with industry, transport, mines, banking and agriculture. They were organised and managed by the State Planning Commission or Gosplan, a huge bureaucracy



THE DNIEPER DAM

The dam near Dnepropetrovsk, part of Russia's greatest hydro-electric scheme, is an example of engineering under the Five-Year Plans. Destroyed in the Second World War, it has now been rebuilt.

of experts, scientists, inventors, statisticians and officials of every kind, many of them, of course, members of the ever-present, all-powerful Communist Party. They built roads and railways, dams and canals, steelworks and tractor factories. They sank mines and cleared forests. They manufactured arms and equipment for a Red Army which must soon have amounted to more than 1,500,000 men, with trained reserves of many times that number.



MAY DAY PARADE IN RED SQUARE, MOSCOW  
An annual festival in celebration of the Bolshevik Revolution.

The Five-Year Plans completely changed the face of Russian agriculture. All the little scattered strips of land which the Russian peasant had formerly cultivated—strips which he had perhaps inherited from his father and which were often divided and subdivided again among his sons after his death till they were so narrow as to be nearly

useless—these strips were now ploughed together into collective farms, each managed by trained experts and supplied with all the latest farm machinery. The peasant, in fact, instead of wastefully and haphazardly tilling his own little plot, which yielded hardly enough to support his family, was now a ‘sharecropper’ in a large, efficient, jointly run village enterprise.

The Five-Year Plans converted a backward, impoverished country into one of the great industrial Powers of the world. They gave Russia the sinews with which, in the Second World War, so soon to come, she was able to fight and repulse the assault of Nazi Germany. But they cost Russia a terrible price. No humane considerations were allowed to stand in their way. In the towns and cities the Plans were sometimes so rushed that the newly founded industries had often to be manned by untrained or half-trained workers. In the prodigious effort to reach the planned output, machines were over-strained and damaged. Break-downs were often blamed on the unfortunate workers, many of whom were arrested and tried for sabotage. In the country peasant holdings were often ‘collectivised’ by force. Wealthier peasants—the *kulaks*, as they were called—who had built up flourishing farms under the NEP and who naturally had no wish to change their ways, were now regarded as enemies of the state and were ‘liquidated’ in their thousands. If, indeed, there was a greatness of purpose and a greatness of vision about the Five-Year Plans, there was also an extreme ruthlessness in the way they were carried out.

## CHAPTER 9

### FASCIST ITALY

#### THE COMING OF MUSSOLINI AND THE FASCIST PARTY

ITALY was one of the victorious Allies of the First World War. But the war had made her suffer much, and she came out of it in anything but a victorious frame of mind. She was touchy and resentful, and she behaved at times in that curious way that is rather the mark of a defeated nation. All through the war she had had a strong anti-war party. Her army had met a heavy defeat in 1917 at Caporetto. At the Peace Conference many things which had been promised had not been given her. Both her record and her winnings made poor showing.

Italy was a kingdom with a constitutional king and a popularly elected parliament, like Britain's. But her people were now discontented, and her Government was very weak. Many thinking Italians were getting tired of the parliamentary system altogether. Unemployment in the early inter-war years was serious; the workers were constantly on strike; many of them were 'camping' in their factories and refusing to man the machines. The wealthier classes feared a Bolshevik revolution in Italy such as had recently taken place in Russia.

An incident occurred in September, 1919, which showed the unsettled mood of the country. D'Annunzio, the famous Italian poet and aviator, at the head of a troop of volunteers, seized Fiume—a port on the Adriatic Sea which the Peace Conference at Paris at that time had intended to assign to Yugoslavia—and held it in the name of Italy.

D'Annunzio was a showy, picturesque adventurer, and he set up in Fiume a crazy, theatrical sort of rule. He took as his motto the words '*Me ne frego!*' ('I don't care a damn!'). He loved speeches, colourful parades and waving of flags. He captured an Italian gunboat and some twenty planes.



A FASCIST PARADE

Black shirts holding a demonstration, a scene typical of Italy in 1922.

He sent a special 'delegate' to the Peace Conference. Finally he 'declared war' on Italy!

The Italian Government had not the least control over D'Annunzio, and could only declare the whole incident at Fiume to be illegal. But the Italian newspapers hugely enjoyed the situation, proclaimed D'Annunzio a national hero and roundly declared that he had given a proper reply

to all the insults which Italy believed she had received at the Peace Conference. In the end, after fifteen months of play-acting, D'Annunzio had to be ejected from Fiume by a force of regular Italian soldiers.

But during those fifteen months D'Annunzio had shown how it was possible to hurl defiance at the legitimate Italian Government and to take the law into his own hands. About the same time another showy adventurer was following in D'Annunzio's footsteps and was trying by methods of force—and also by speeches, parades and waving of flags—to cure the country's discontents. His name was Benito Mussolini. But he did not only try to seize a single town; he tried to seize all Italy.

Mussolini was the son of a blacksmith, and born in poverty. He grew into a roving wanderer—a school-master, stonemason, journalist and political agitator by turns. In 1914 he was a Socialist and pacifist. But in 1915, when Italy entered the war, he served loyally as a soldier, was wounded, and was afterwards honourably discharged from the Italian army.

Like many another young man after the First World War, Mussolini felt cruelly frustrated and unsettled. But his energies were soon absorbed in the building up of a new political party which he believed would regenerate his country. He founded his first Fascio, or party group, in Milan in March, 1919. He was shortly joined by many of D'Annunzio's volunteers after they had been



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THE FASCES, an ancient Roman emblem of unity and strength, adopted by the Italian Fascists.



driven out of Fiume. In three years Mussolini's party grew to 300,000 members.

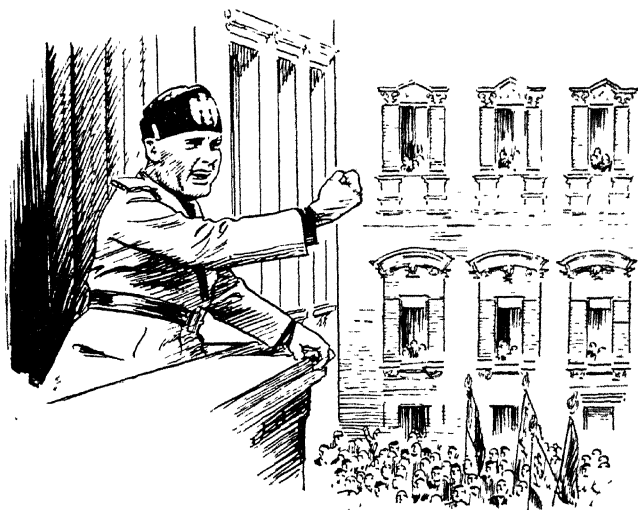
Mussolini's party was called the Fascist Party. It took its name from the *fascis*, an ancient Roman emblem of unity and strength. It never seemed to have much of a programme or a definite doctrine, but clearly it was out for power, and it was not very scrupulous as to how that power was to be gained. But it was always patriotic, anti-Socialist and anti-Communist. It preached a strong Italy, an aggressive attitude to other countries and a great empire overseas; it gloried in talk of war and in all the war-like virtues. It was always highly excitable and fond of noise and display. Its members wore black shirts, and, armed with cudgels, they went marching about the streets, holding meetings, breaking up workers' strikes and picking quarrels with their political opponents. Sometimes they forcibly dosed their opponents with castor oil. And this party grew rapidly into a one-man dictatorship similar to many we have seen in recent times.

The Italian Government hardly understood this strange new force in the nation's life, and offered no real opposition. Neither the King, nor the army, nor the Church interfered. By 1922 it was clear that Fascism was the real power in the land. In October of that year Fascism was ready for revolution, and 50,000 black-shirted Fascist squadrists made their famous March on Rome. The King saw no alternative but to make Mussolini Premier.

#### MUSSOLINI'S HOME POLICY

Much to the surprise of many in Italy and abroad, Mussolini now proved himself to be a statesman. He had

absolute power, but he used it ably. Italy is not a country blessed with great natural wealth, but Mussolini was determined to make the most of the resources she had. He reformed the state finances and balanced the budget. He forbade strikes and lock-outs. He started huge



MUSSOLINI ON HIS BALCONY

The Italian Dictator addressing the crowd from the balcony of the Piazza Venezia.

public works and buildings to absorb the unemployed. In the course of a few years he drained marshes, reclaimed waste lands, created new industries, built new towns, replanned parts of Rome. Certainly, under his inspired leadership, business throughout Italy took a decided turn for the better.

The country looked more prosperous, the trains ran on

time, the miserable hordes of beggars disappeared from off the streets, the police were courteous and helpful, and shop-keepers did not overcharge. Tourists who had known the old down-at-heel, happy-go-lucky Italy came back full of praises for the efficient new Italy that had been born and for the great Fascist Duce who had fathered her.

But Mussolini insisted on holding all power in his own hands—otherwise he could not have carried out his many reforms—and his rule was ruthless and unforgiving. The old squads of Black Shirts were now converted into a Fascist Militia, and could always be instantly called up for action. Mussolini controlled the newspapers, the radio and the schools. He permitted no political parties but the Fascist Party. The election laws were revised so that Fascist majorities only would be elected to parliament. Everywhere Fascist leaders became mayors and high officials. Mussolini even formed a secret police—the dread *Ovra*.

But sometimes violence went too far. In 1924, Matteotti, the well-known Socialist leader and opponent of Fascism, was kidnapped, and was afterwards found murdered. The crime was the work of the Fascist squads, and evidence since has clearly implicated Mussolini himself. At the time, so serious was the outcry against him throughout the country that he was nearly driven from power. Generally, Fascism's hands were clean of murder, but beatings and bludgeonings were common enough, and the prisons in Italy were always full.

#### MUSSOLINI'S FOREIGN POLICY

It was Mussolini's foreign policy which made many even of his admirers doubt and fear. Mussolini wanted Italy

to be strong; he wanted her to have a strong army, navy and air force equipped and trained in all the most modern weapons; he wanted an empire overseas. He wanted, in particular, to dominate the Balkans, and he wanted to make the Mediterranean an Italian sea—'Our Sea', as he called it. He was always talking of war and conquest, of his 8,000,000 bayonets and of his planes which would darken the sky. He invariably wore uniform himself. His favourite photographs pictured him in a steel helmet, scowling and arrogant.



BENITO MUSSOLINI, the Fascist Duce, Italian Premier, 1922-1943.

Mussolini first showed his hand in 1923. In August of that year an Italian general, one of a party drawing up a new frontier between Albania and Greece, was killed by Greek patriots. It was a serious incident, though, granted good will, it could have been quietly settled. But Mussolini raged and blustered. He demanded not only death-sentences for the assassins, but a fine to be paid by Greece and a handsome apology. He then sent a squadron of warships to bombard the Greek island of Corfu. The Greek Government appealed to the League of Nations, and for a few days it looked as if Italy and Greece would go to war. In the end, Mussolini got his death-sentences, his fine and his apology. He had made a demonstration of strength which well satisfied him. He had served notice on the world that the new Fascist Italy would 'stand no non-

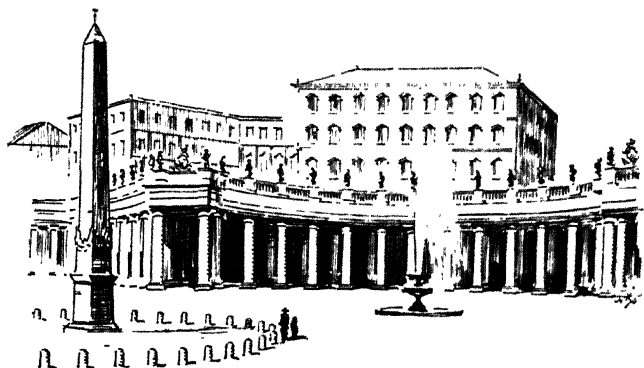
sense'. But his conduct was very disturbing to lovers of peace everywhere.

After Corfu, Mussolini lay comparatively quiet for the next twelve years. But in 1935 he went to war with Abyssinia, and in 1936 he sent Italian forces to fight in the Spanish Civil War. These two events, and their sequel, we must describe in a later chapter.

#### VATICAN CITY

Mussolini solved one question, the Roman Question as it was called, which had vexed Italian statesmen for more than fifty years. He came to terms with the Pope. In 1870, when Italians were fighting to become a free and united people, their King Victor Emmanuel II at the head of his troops had occupied Rome and proclaimed it the new capital of Italy. But Rome for centuries had been the seat of the Pope and capital of 'the Papal States', and Pius IX, the Pope at that time, denounced Victor Emmanuel as an usurper and, as a mark of protest, retired into voluntary imprisonment in the Vatican. From then on the question remained as to how, and on what terms, the city of Rome could be shared by Pope and King as capital of both the Holy See and the Kingdom of Italy.

Fascism was in constant friction with the Catholic Church, even though Catholicism has always been the religion of the great majority of the Italian people. For example, Mussolini dissolved the Catholic youth organisation, because he considered it a rival of his own Fascist youth organisation, the Balilla. But, in 1929, after long negotiations, Mussolini signed the Lateran Agreements with the Pope's Secre-



VATICAN CITY

Vatican City, the seat of the Papacy, a sovereign state just over 100 acres in area, contains the Basilica of St. Peter and the Pope's Palace.

tary of State, and the Roman Question was declared to be finally settled.

Under these Agreements, the Pope 'recognised' Victor Emmanuel III as the King of Italy. Vatican City, within Rome, became a separate territory. Actually it is the smallest sovereign state in the world. It covers 109 acres and has about 450 resident inhabitants. But it entitles the Pope to regard himself as a 'temporal' sovereign, completely independent of the rest of Rome and of the King and Government of Italy. It contains the great Basilica of St. Peter, the mother church of Catholic Christendom, and also the Vatican Palace and gardens, and it has a railway station and radio station of its own. The Lateran Agreements greatly increased the political prestige of the Holy See, and Pius XII, the Pope to-day, exerts a powerful influence in international affairs throughout the world.

## CHAPTER 10

### THE NEAR EAST

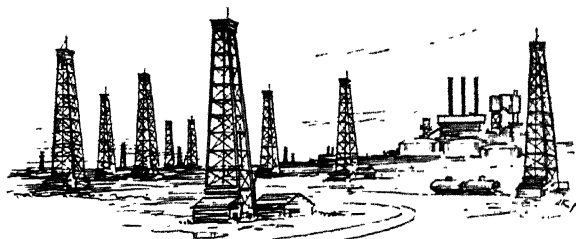
#### THE LAND OF THE FIVE SEAS

TO the south-east of Europe, where Asia and Africa come together, lies the Near East, a region which has sometimes been called the Land of the Five Seas. In ancient times it was the meeting-place of great empires. Hittites, Egyptians, Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Parthians and Arabs all ruled over it. It was probably far more populous and fertile then than it is now. The Syrian Desert seems to have drifted northwards, and lands once flowing with milk and honey, like Palestine, parts of Syria and Iraq, and Persia, have become arid, dry and impoverished.

The people are largely Moslems, or Mohammedans. Their religion was founded in the seventh century A.D. by the Arab prophet, Mohammed, a man who was originally a caravan merchant. Their Holy Cities are Mecca and Medina, where Mohammed lived, taught and fought. They themselves call their religion Islam, which is the Arabic word for 'submission' to the will of God. Their religion thence spread by conquest over large tracts of the Near East, westwards as far as Morocco and eastwards as far as India, Malaya and even to many islands of the East Indies. But in the Near East are also many clusters of older communities, Jews and Christians, who have survived, and they are of various denominations. Jerusalem is a city sacred to Jews, Christians and Moslems alike.

Yet, though less populous and poorer, the character of

these lands has changed very slowly through the centuries. Here men have lived and worked, tilled their fields and watched their flocks, followed the same caravan routes and fought the same battles for soil, water and pasture, much as they have done since the days of Abraham. To-day there are some new cities, often built on old historic sites, which show modern European influence—such as Cairo, Alexandria, Beirut, Basra; in 1914 a railway began to link



OIL WELLS IN IRAQ

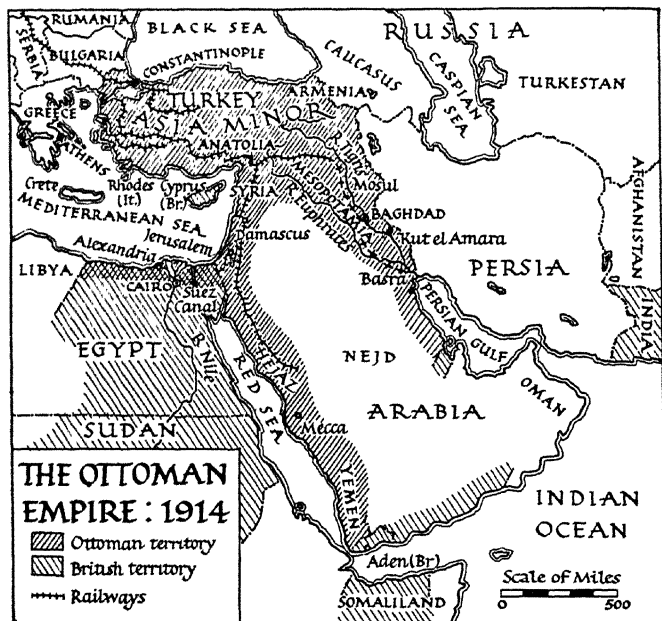
The Near East to-day is one of the world's most important sources of oil and is the meeting-point of strategic sea and air routes.

Constantinople (Istanbul) with Baghdad; trade has flowed back and forth through the Suez Canal; oil has been discovered in Mesopotamia (Iraq), Persia (Iran) and Arabia. But these new things have come slowly, and they have often created unexpected hardships and difficulties. It has never been easy to put new wine into old bottles in the East.

The last of the great empires in this part of the world was the Ottoman Empire, set up in the thirteenth century by the Ottoman Turks, a Moslem people. It once stretched to the great bend of the Danube and along the northern coast of Africa. But in 1914, though much shrunk and long since past its prime, it still sprawled over



the Near East like a great, many-legged giant. In 1914 this Empire entered the First World War on the side of Germany, it defended the Dardanelles in a great campaign



The Ottoman Empire, which entered the First World War on the side of Germany in 1914, then comprised Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, Syria and the greater part of Arabia. Egypt was under British occupation.

which we mentioned in Chapter 2\*, and it was defeated at last largely by British forces in battles in Palestine and Mesopotamia.

## TURKEY

It had been the firm resolve of the Allies in the First World War to carve up the Ottoman Empire and dispose of the pieces among themselves. The Ottoman Government of recent years, quite apart from the fact that it had been pro-German, had been corrupt and despotic, and there were many who would have been glad to see the last of it. Thus Greece had been promised a slice of territory round Smyrna, and Italy a slice round Adalia; Russia had been promised the Dardanelles; France had been promised Syria. Then in 1916 that adventurous and picturesque Englishman, Colonel Lawrence, helped to organise a revolt among the Arabs of the Hejaz—the Revolt in the Desert as it came to be known. In 1917 the British Government also pledged itself to ‘the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people’. Unfortunately, many of these agreements and promises, made under the stress of war at different times and by different people, were afterwards found to be contradictory, and some were never carried into effect.

Russia did not get the Dardanelles. In 1917 Russia was in revolution, and the Allies assumed that all agreements lapsed which they had previously made with her. But Greece took steps to take over her own share of the spoils, and in 1919 Greek forces landed at Smyrna and began marching inland. In August, 1920, at Sèvres, Turkish delegates signed a treaty of peace which would have left Turkey a mere rump of land round Angora.

Sèvres was the last of the series of peace treaties that began with Versailles, and in many ways it was the harshest

of them all. One Turk—Mustapha Kemal, then a young Colonel—was determined that the treaty should not be fulfilled. He was a professional soldier, who had interested himself in politics. During the war he had fought gallantly against the British in Gallipoli. In 1919 he was in the interior of Turkey already organising what was left of the Turkish army. After Sèvres he raised his standard, attacked the Greek invasion forces, and drove them in headlong rout back to Smyrna, where his own victorious army mercilessly massacred thousands of them. None of the former Allies seemed disposed to go to war with the new Turkish hero in order to enforce the Treaty of Sèvres. In July, 1923, at Lausanne, the Allies signed a new treaty with Turkey which confirmed Mustapha Kemal in all his newly won possessions and power.

The map on page 120 shows the Turkey which emerged from these events. She occupied the whole of Asia Minor, a great rectangular block of land, the territory round Constantinople, and the Dardanelles. Her new capital was at Angora. Mustapha Kemal was elected President of the Turkish Republic, as it was now called, and at once bent his energies to the reconstruction of the nation he had saved. He became, in fact, one of the modern dictators, one of that type of popular, revolutionary autocratic ruler that the world of our time was to see in Lenin, Mussolini, Primo de Rivera, Pilsudski—and Hitler. But Mustapha Kemal's



MUSTAPHA KEMAL (Ataturk),  
First President of the Turkish  
Republic, 1923-1938.

rule on the whole was just and benevolent, and he carried out a programme of reform of the greatest importance.

Mustapha Kemal started by abolishing the Caliphate. The Caliph was the official leader of the Moslem faith. He has been described as a sort of Pope, but the description is not altogether exact. Literally he was the 'successor' of the prophet Mohammed, and he claimed to be the spiritual and temporal ruler of all Islam. When the Ottoman Empire rose to power, the Ottoman Sultan was generally recognised also as the Caliph. But as the Ottoman Empire declined the Caliph's power and prestige declined with it. In 1914 the Caliph, Mohammed VI, was a rather kindly, ornamental old gentleman whom no one any longer took very seriously. He survived the First World War, but played no part in it himself, and shortly after the Greek defeat at Smyrna he fled into exile. In March, 1924, Mustapha Kemal abolished his office altogether.

The new modernised Turkish Republic which Mustapha Kemal was trying to build up was probably better without the Caliph's reactionary influence. The Turkish parliament—the National Assembly—was already bringing in laws which many strict Moslems considered revolutionary and even anti-religious. Thus education was made compulsory and universal. There were new civil, criminal and commercial codes. The Latin alphabet superseded the old Turkish script. Names of places were changed to their Turkish forms, Constantinople thus became Istanbul, Angora Ankara, and Smyrna Izmir. The position of women was revolutionised; they voted in the elections for the National Assembly; they entered professions, such as nursing, teaching and even Government service; they laid



After the First World War, Syria and Lebanon became French Mandates, and Palestine, Iraq and Trans-Jordan became British Mandates. Palestine was 'a national home for the Jewish people'. Arabs had hoped that these territories would have combined with Arabia as a great Arab federation.

aside the veil which Moslem women had worn since the days of the Prophet. Public health, agriculture, railways, banking were all included in the Kemalist programme. In January, 1935, Mustapha Kemal took the name of Ataturk, 'the father of the Turks'. It was a name he well deserved. He died in November, 1938, full of honours, mourned by a loyal people.

Considering the deplorable state of Turkey after the

First World War, her steady development since was little short of miraculous. But the reforms we have described were not always brought in without opposition, and Kemal often found he had to act more tyrannically and dictatorially than perhaps he might otherwise have wished. Industry and trade were carefully regulated, especially trade with foreign countries. Latterly Kemal introduced successive 'Five-Year Plans' in imitation of Soviet Russia. In the end the State came to control more and more of men's lives, and when Kemal died there was little freedom or democracy left in Turkey.

## SYRIA AND PALESTINE

In Chapter 6 \* we said that, as part of the peace settlement, certain territories formerly belonging to Germany and Turkey were converted into 'Mandates' under the supervision of the League of Nations. These were often territories inhabited 'by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world', and more 'advanced nations' therefore had to act as Mandatory Powers, hold the territories in trust and govern them till such time as they might be considered ready for independence. In this way Syria and Lebanon became the mandate of France, and Mesopotamia and Palestine the mandates of Britain.

Needless to say, the inhabitants of these territories were not always happy under the new arrangement. No people likes to be told that it is not fit to govern itself. Many thought that the new mandates would be little better than colonies under another name. In particular the Arabs in

\* Page 68.

these territories - a proud race, led by proud leaders—far from wanting to become the mandates of a foreign Power, dreamed rather of forming a great Arab federation and of reviving all the glories of the old Arab Caliphates of the past.

The sad fact is that, when Syria and Lebanon were made a French mandate, the Syrians and the Lebanese themselves were hardly ever consulted, and the French found that they could govern them only by means of military governors and by keeping 90,000 French troops in the territory. The situation was made more complicated by the large number of Christians who lived in Lebanon and belonged to more than a dozen separate sects, each with its separate churches, priests and patriarchs; and even the Moslem Arabs had sects of their own. In 1925 the Druze Arabs living in the Jebel ("the Mountain") rebelled against the French, and a minor civil war raged in Syria for nearly two years. In 1936 the French signed treaties with both the Syrians and the Lebanese promising them independence within three years; but in 1939, when the Second World War broke out, the Syria-Lebanon problem was still unsolved.

Palestine was a problem of another kind. Palestine was the ancient Promised Land of the Jews; it was the Holy Land of Christianity; in the seventh century it had been conquered by the Arabs, who had adopted both Moses and Jesus Christ as prophets of their own religion, and it had thus become sacred to Moslems also. For many years before the First World War influential groups of Jews all over the world, calling themselves Zionists, had agitated for Palestine once more to become Jewish, and the Turks, who then ruled Palestine, had consented to Zionist

'colonies' being founded in the country. 'Then in 1917, as we said above\*, the British Government promised to establish in Palestine 'a national home for the Jewish people'.

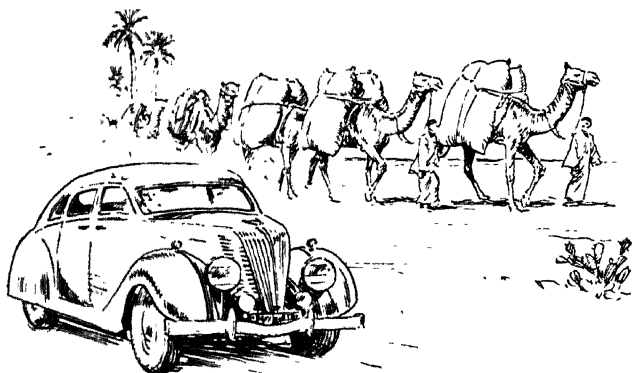
The problem of Palestine arose out of the fact that Arabs and Jews both believed the land belonged to them by right and resented the presence of the other party in it. Particularly did the Arabs resent the new influx of Jewish colonists who began to stream into Palestine after the First World War and then again after the Nazi persecution of the Jews in Germany; nor, if the truth were to be told, did the old Palestinian Jews take too kindly to the influx either. The Arabs might have been content if Palestine had been made into a small Jewish 'notch' on the edge of a great Arab State stretching across the Near East. But the Zionists wanted to be much more than a 'notch', and the great Arab State never came into being.

The new Jewish settlers in Palestine brought with them all the skill and scientific knowledge of educated Europeans, they had the backing of wealthy Zionist organisations in Britain and America, and often enough, when buying land for their new homes, farms and industries, they out-sold the poorer and more ignorant Arab cultivators whose families perhaps had lived on the same land for centuries. The new Jewish settlers, indeed, gave Palestine a prosperity it had never known before. Its once dry and stony hills sprouted with crops; oranges and wheat flourished; priceless fertiliser was extracted from the salts of the Dead Sea. Ports and harbours and whole new towns were built. But this same prosperity filled the Arabs with



alarm. They were quite unequal to competing with it, and they could only see themselves growing poorer and poorer by comparison, and being gradually driven back into the desert.

As we have said, Palestine after the First World War became a mandate of Britain, and to the British Government therefore fell the responsibility of keeping the peace between the two antagonistic races that lived in it. The task was a very delicate one and, with the best intentions in the world, could not be expected to be unbrokenly successful. The British Government kept troops and police in Palestine, but riots and strikes and armed clashes between Jews and Arabs were of common occurrence. In 1938 there was a full-scale Arab rebellion. British Government Commissions and White Papers, one after another, in the



OLD AND NEW IN THE NEAR EAST

Car and caravan on the same road in the Syrian Desert. Many difficulties in the Near and Far East have arisen out of the introduction of modern Western methods into countries of ancient customs.

twenty years between the two World Wars put forward solutions; but in 1939, when the Second World War broke out, Palestine, like Syria, was still an unsolved problem.

## EGYPT

In 1914 Egypt was in a most curious position. She was nominally a vassal State of the Ottoman Empire, but actually a protectorate of Britain. During the First World War she was fully occupied by British troops, stationed there not only to hold a land of great wealth, but also to protect the all-important life-line of the Suez Canal. She became the base of operations from which the British battles in Palestine were fought.

But Egypt was like India. Her people were becoming intensely nationalist, passionately desiring their freedom and resenting the presence of alien troops and alien Government officials on her soil. The Egyptian Nationalist Party was called the Wafd—literally ‘the delegation’, after the delegation it sent to Paris to plead its case in 1919 when the Peace Conference was sitting—and its leader, till his death in 1927, was Zaghlul Pasha. Like India’s, the recent history of Egypt was largely the history of the struggle of this Nationalist Party to achieve political independence. But, also like India’s, the Nationalist Party was not always what it pretended to be; numbers of its members were ignorant, illiterate fellaheen, and its record was stained by a good deal of violence and corruption.

In 1922, soon after the First World War, the British Government declared Egypt independent, and the Egyptian Sultan was given the title of King. But the British Government reserved the right to keep troops in the country

for the proper garrisoning of the Suez Canal. Egyptian independence was therefore an independence of name only, and the Wafdist Party was far from satisfied. Time and time again the British Government tried to reconcile Egyptian opinion, but the Wafd took its stand uncompromisingly for complete independence and the withdrawal of British troops. King Fuad often found he had to rule the country dictatorially through non-Wafdist Premiers, who were bitterly opposed by the vast majority of the people.

In 1936 Britain and Egypt signed a treaty which settled much that was in dispute between them. King Fuad had died, and the boy King Farouk had succeeded. The Italo-Abyssinian War had just ended with the complete victory of Italy, and the Egyptians, no doubt alarmed at the new spirit of aggression in the Mediterranean, did not find British 'protection' quite so objectionable as before. In 1939, therefore, when the Second World War broke out, British troops were still in Egypt, and the British navy had still the right to use the port of Alexandria. The history of the Second World War in the Near East might have been very different if Britain had not been in a position to hold and defend this strategically vital country.

#### ARABIA, IRAQ AND TRANS-JORDAN

The First World War freed the Arabs from Turkish rule, and it was expected, both by the Arabs themselves and by the war-time Allies, that an independent Arab State or federation would be set up as part of the peace settlement. As we said above\*, some sort of agreement to this effect was

made during the war years. The British favoured the claims of Sherif Hussein, ruler of the Hejaz, Protector of the Holy Cities, and a descendant of the Prophet Mohammed. A son of Hussein, the Emir Feisal, was one of the Arab leaders who took part in Colonel Lawrence's 'Revolt in the Desert'. But Damascus, which should have become the capital of the new Arab State, after the war fell into the French mandate of Syria, and in 1919 Feisal, who should have been the new Arab king, quarrelled with the French Government and had to flee his city. And then a new and greater Arab leader arose in the person of Ibn Saud.

The desert expanse of Arabia has had very little in the way of history except the careers of the great chieftains whom on occasions it has produced. Sometimes it has fallen under the control of a conquering Power from outside, as it had done in the case of the Ottoman Empire; but it was always a difficult country to rule, and the control was usually rather shadowy. In many ways Arabia resembled Scotland or Ireland in the days of the clans. The people were fierce and unruly, with a strong sense of family pride, grouping themselves round first one tribal chief and then another. Such a chieftain had been the Prophet Mohammed, founder of the Moslem religion. And such a chieftain also was Abdel-Aziz Ibn Saud.

Ibn Saud had begun life as a landless exile. But he had warrior blood in his veins, he was an ardent Moslem, and he was a descendant of another Ibn Saud who had ruled over the Nejd in central Arabia in former times. Evidently he was destined for greatness. He set about to revive the kingdom and religion of his ancestor. His method was to establish 'brotherhoods' or colonies of fighters, devoted to

himself, one colony to every well and oasis in the desert. During the First World War he had little to do with the Turks, and he had been friendly to the British, who he hoped would be the liberators of Arabia. But while the rest of the world was at war he had carried on his own smaller desert war, and had gradually extended his colonies round the fringes of the Nejd. By 1919 he was a power in Arabia. He had already crossed swords with some of the Hejaz tribesmen, his strongest rivals, and had even fought a pitched battle with Abdullah, the son of Hussin and brother of Feisal.

These events stirred up the feelings of Arabs everywhere, and especially of those Arabs in Mesopotamia, which in the First World War had been invaded and occupied by British and British-Indian forces. Britain was interested in Mesopotamia partly because of the oil that had been discovered there and partly because of its nearness to India. So Mesopotamia, as we have said, became a British mandate, and Britain set about establishing the same kind of government there as then existed, for instance, in an Indian Province. In 1920 the Arabs of Mesopotamia, who had very different ideas as to the future of their country, revolted. But in the end, by general agreement with all concerned, Feisal, whom the French had recently expelled from Damascus, was chosen king. The new state was called Iraq. In 1930, by treaty with Britain, the state became independent, and was shortly made a member of the League of Nations.

Meanwhile Abdullah, defeated by Ibn Saud, was believed to be collecting a new force of men, this time to march on Damascus and avenge himself on the French for their treat-

ment of his brother Feisal. But, largely by British influence, he was persuaded to hold back, and a new country was found for him to rule over, called Trans-Jordan.

This, then, was the shape of the Arab lands shortly after the First World War: Sherif Hussein still ruled in the Hejaz, and his two sons, Feisal and Abdullah, ruled in Iraq and Trans-Jordan. But in the centre of Arabia had arisen a greater than they—Ibn Saud, Sultan of the Nejd.

So the situation might have stood, in spite of the natural jealousy of these desert chieftains. All influences were in favour of peace. But when Mustapha Kemal in Turkey abolished the Caliphate—an event we described above\*—Sherif Hussein in the Hejaz immediately proclaimed himself the new Caliph, the Leader of the Faithful. This was too much for Ibn Saud, who collected his forces, invaded the Hejaz, drove Hussein out of his kingdom, and annexed it to his own domain.

After this victory Ibn Saud was unexpectedly conciliatory. He held a big Islamic Congress at Mecca to secure recognition for himself and his followers from Moslems in all countries. He was able to improve the conditions of travel for the pilgrims who visited the Holy Cities. He entered into friendly agreements with his two Arab neighbours, Feisal in Iraq and Abdullah in Trans-Jordan. His relations with Britain were always scrupulously correct. He proved a strong, steadying influence during the thirties, when the Balkans and the Near East began to feel the effects of Fascism and Nazism, and especially when, after Feisal's death in 1936, politics in Iraq became confused and

threatening. To-day his kingdom is called after him Saudi Arabia.

The Arab countries have long been extremely interesting and important to us. The idea of a great Arab State or federation is far from dead. An Arab League is in existence, and there is a movement for the unification, not only of Arabs, but of all Moslems throughout the Near East. Unfortunately Arabs and Moslems are split into various sects. But if ever an Arab State or federation comes to be formed, we may be sure that Ibn Saud will play a considerable part in it.

## CHAPTER 11

### BRITAIN AND THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH

#### INTER-WAR BRITAIN

**B**RITAIN went through a curious, troubled phase of her history between the two World Wars. It was a time of disappointment and disillusion for every one. The country had borne the First World War with great fortitude, but it had endured much. It had not been invaded; the damage to its cities by air-raid was very small; it had not suffered the same loss of life as had Germany, France or Russia. But the people of Britain expected too much from the results of the war. Armistice Day, November 11, 1918, was a day of thankfulness and rejoicing. Peace had come, and the future seemed secure. Yet in a few years the

country was in the throes of terrible labour unrest, shrinking trade, strikes and unemployment and almost endless difficulties abroad. Britain thought she deserved a better fate.

The big mistake, as we see it now, which the British people made during the inter-war period was to think that they would step back comfortably and effortlessly to the prosperous days of 1914. The defeated nations of the First World War all went through revolutions, as a result of which they had at least tried to start their lives anew. But Britain, instead of starting anew, tried to go back. The British people never seemed to realise that the war had changed the world—and perhaps, from their point of view, had changed it for the worse—and that the good old days they once knew were gone for ever.

Yet the first years of peace gave good grounds for hopefulness. The years from 1919 to 1921, in fact, were years of quite remarkable prosperity. During the war the British people had put up with all kinds of shortages and inconveniences, and peace brought a sudden boom in business. The conditions were not unlike those which also followed the Second World War. The people wanted to have everything that, for the four years of war, they had been forced to do without. There were all sorts of repairs to be done, clothes to be made, cars to be bought, holidays and amusements to be enjoyed. There were war savings and war gratuities to be spent. Everyone felt the relief and reaction from the war. Such was the sudden burst of activity in 1919 that the army and the munition workers were more quickly demobilised than anyone had originally expected, and all were absorbed into civilian life.



The Government, of course, was optimistic, and thought it had nothing to do but speed up the natural process of peace. During the war the Government had controlled food, railways, mines, prices and wages, and foreign exchange, and all these controls were now lifted. But by 1920 the boom in business was already passing. It was realised too late that the Government had been in too much of a hurry and that war-time controls ought to have been kept on longer. Prices and wages began to drop, business declined, and men were thrown out of work.

From 1920 to 1926 was the great era of strikes in Britain. The trade unions talked dangerously of a General Strike of all their members—‘direct action’, as they called it—to force the Government and the employers to restore their wages. Early in 1921 occurred the first of the great coal-miners’ strikes, and at that time there were altogether 2,000,000 registered unemployed in Britain.

Coal had always been the basis of Britain’s industrial power, and the difficulties of the coal-miners therefore were in the nature of a test for the whole of British industry. Certainly the miners were shockingly paid, and most of them had to live in the most squalid, disgraceful conditions. A weekly wage of thirty shillings was not much to support a wife and family on. Many mines had been worked at a loss during the war and were now being closed down altogether. And unhappily coal was no longer of the same importance it had once been. New fuels, like oil, were in the market, and on land and sea these new fuels were driving new kinds of vehicles and new kinds of ships which no longer had need of coal.

## CONSERVATIVE—LABOUR—CONSERVATIVE—LABOUR

All this unrest and discontent we have been describing was reflected in the political situation. In December, 1918—just after the Armistice—a general election was held, and Lloyd George, Britain's war-time Premier, was returned to power with an immense majority. Women voted for the first time. Lloyd George decided that a Coalition Government of all parties, such as the one he had headed during the war, was the most suitable government for tackling the big new problems of the peace. The election, however, had been fought in the midst of the excitement and hysteria of victory, and clearly the electors were not in the most level-headed mood. These were the days when Members were returned to Parliament on the electioneering cries of 'Hang the Kaiser!' and 'Squeeze the orange till the pips squeak!' Afterwards the British people had time to think and reconsider, and perhaps they were rather ashamed of their Khaki Election, as it afterwards came to be called. At all events, Lloyd George's Coalition was quite unable to cope with the nation's new difficulties.

In October, 1922, Lloyd George resigned, and the Conservative Bonar Law became Premier. From this moment the political history of Britain became a long, ding-dong battle between Conservatives and Labour, each party trying in its own way to solve the same vicious problems of unemployment and trade. Lloyd George himself had been a Liberal, and he continued to be the leader of a small group of National Liberals. But the Liberal Party as a whole, though it still had several brilliant men in it, never recovered its old importance.

So the Conservative Baldwin became Premier in May, 1923, and then Ramsay MacDonald became Britain's first Labour Premier in January, 1924, and then Baldwin again



RAMSAY MACDONALD, British Labour leader and Prime Minister, 1924, 1929-1935.

became Premier in November, 1924. There were three general elections in eighteen months.

The General Strike took place in May, 1926. It was the climax of the long series of strikes which had started in 1920. It all began as usual with protests from the miners against new wage reductions. Other unions came out in sympathy with the miners. In the end the three big trade unions—the miners, the railwaymen and the transport workers—to the number of 2,500,000 men, struck work. Even the printers struck, and for days the country was without newspapers.

This was 'direct action' indeed. On the whole the country sympathised with the miners, but it deeply resented the methods of force which the unions were using. The Government in reply declared a virtual state of war. Naval ratings took over the power-stations and reservoirs; troops occupied the dockyards; tanks trundled through the streets. Hundreds of strikers were jailed. A huge 'milk pool' was organised at Hyde Park in London. Numbers of young volunteers, many of them out of school and college, ran the buses, trams and trains.

The General Strike could have been a success only if it had succeeded quickly. It did not succeed quickly, and bloodshed must soon have resulted. At the end of a week

the Trade Unions' General Council decided to end the struggle, and the railwaymen and transport workers went back to work. The General Strike was over. But the miners continued on strike independently for another six months.

Three years of comparative calm followed the General Strike. Baldwin was Premier throughout. Unemployment had certainly not grown less, but the miners were sullen with defeat, and the trade unions had found that repeated strikes had exhausted their funds. In 1929 the country showed its mood in a new election, and Ramsay MacDonald was returned at the head of a second Labour Government.



STANLEY (later Earl) BALDWIN,  
British Conservative leader and  
Prime Minister, 1923-1924, 1924-  
1929, 1935-1937.

#### IRELAND

Britain had many difficulties in these inter-war years, but they were not all at home. In other parts of the world, wherever she had interests, there was trouble and unrest. We have not the space in this book to discuss all these things, but we ought at least to say a few words about Ireland and India.

England and Ireland have had a long, bitter history of misunderstanding and disagreement. In 1914, at the time of the First World War, Northern and Southern Ireland were almost at a point of war between themselves. In 1916,

during the First World War, a rebellion flared up in Dublin and had to be suppressed by British troops. In 1919 the Irish Civil War broke out.

Southern Ireland had always wanted Home Rule. She wanted to be independent of Britain. She was Catholic, and all her traditions were anti-British. After the Khaki Election of 1918 in Britain she refused to send any more Members to the Parliament at Westminster, and instead she set up a parliament of her own in Dublin—the Dail, as it was called. Eamon De Valera, leader of the Sinn Fein Party—the extreme Irish nationalists—was elected ‘President of the Irish Republic’. But Ulster, or Northern Ireland, clung obstinately to Britain. She was Protestant, and all her traditions were pro-British. Between the desires of Catholic, Nationalist Southern Ireland and Protestant, pro-British Northern Ireland there seemed to be no solution.

On a certain fine spring day in 1919 an Irish policeman was shot dead in the streets of Dublin. The crime was afterwards attributed to one of the men of the I.R.A., or Irish Republic Army, recruited and organised from among the more violent Irish nationalists. On successive days more Irish policemen were shot. The British Government, taking alarm, reinforced the British troops in Ireland. It also reinforced the Irish police—the Royal Irish Constabulary—and sent over to Ireland for the purpose some hundreds of recently demobilised British soldiers. As there were not enough police uniforms available, these soldiers were served out with dark Glengarry caps and khaki, and they came to be known as the Black and Tans.

By 1920 the I.R.A. and the Black and Tans were at war with one another. It was a wretched, stealthy, under-

cover sort of war. No holds were barred. Men were shot down in dark streets, at the doors of their homes, in deserted country lanes. Irish houses and farms were burned down as reprisals. It was a war that might have dragged on miserably for years. In later years people referred to it as the Irish Civil War.

Lloyd George, then British Premier, assisted by Winston Churchill, was determined that the war should be stopped. De Valera visited them in London, but could come to no agreement. Then other Irish leaders, Michael Collins and Arthur Griffith, came to London, and finally, in December, 1921, a treaty between Britain and Ireland was signed.

The treaty established an Irish Free State, having the rank of a British Dominion, with a separate parliament in Dublin. But the treaty required all members of this parliament to swear an Oath of Allegiance to the King of England. Extreme Irish nationalists were not satisfied. They wanted Ireland to become an independent republic. They wanted to cut adrift from all connection with England and with the King. But moderate opinion in Southern Ireland won the day, and the Southern Irish Dail accepted the treaty by a small majority. For a time De Valera and his party was ousted from the leadership of Irish politics. Northern Ireland, however, refused to join the new Irish Free State, remained loyal to England, and shortly set up a separate parliament at Belfast.

The settlement was hardly a happy one, though in the circumstances it is hard to imagine a better. British troops and the Black and Tans all left Ireland shortly after the signing of the treaty, but fighting between dissatisfied

Irish factions in Southern Ireland continued for some time. Michael Collins himself was assassinated in August, 1922.

Ireland grew relatively quieter in the years that followed, but in 1932, after new elections, De Valera came back to power, and he used the opportunity to bring in several nationalist reforms. He abolished the Oath of Allegiance; he imposed tariffs on British goods; he stopped the payment of land annuities; he replaced the Governor-General with an Irish President; he changed the name of Ireland to the older Gaelic form of 'Eire'; he called upon Britain to forgo the right to use certain Irish harbours. De Valera's reforms aroused considerable opposition and anger in England and in Ireland as well. It is very doubtful whether they were strictly legal. But to-day, to all intents and purposes, Eire is an independent republic, living her own separate life, and she has completely severed Ireland's ancient political ties with England.

Whether the situation in Ireland is to be permanent we cannot tell. Economically there seems to have been little harm or benefit either way. But British Governments have always feared the idea of an independent Ireland on Britain's Atlantic flank, an Ireland which might become a base for a hostile Power in time of war. During the Second World War, when German submarines were active in the Atlantic, the loss to Britain of the use of the Southern Irish harbours was a very serious handicap.

One factor in the situation, however, which Southern Ireland herself does not consider as permanent is the present separation of Northern and Southern Ireland. De Valera has always demanded a single, undivided Eire.

But Ulster remains strongly and loyally British, and it is unlikely that she will ever permit De Valera's desired union to take place.

#### INDIA

As in Ireland, so in India there was also a strong popular party which earnestly desired national independence. But the situation was complicated in the extreme. India is a huge sub-continent about twenty times the area of Great Britain. In 1921 she had a population of 320,000,000 (in 1941 it was nearly 400,000,000), a fifth of the human race, speaking over 200 languages and professing eight religions, though, in the main, two of these religions—Hinduism and Mohammedanism—were the most important.

Two-thirds of the population were Hindus, divided into some 2,000 castes. The Brahmins, or priests, made the highest caste. A Hindu was born into his caste, and never married outside it; a Hindu father passed on his calling and his property to his sons. At the bottom of the caste system were the 'Untouchables', who belonged to no caste, who were forbidden the temples and schools, were sometimes forbidden the very roads and highways and wells, and were hopeless of ever improving their degraded state. The Hindu religion was a strange mixture, some of it very ancient, some of it profoundly philosophical, some of it the crudest idol-worship.

A quarter of the population was Mohammedan, or Moslem. The Moslems believed in one God and in one Prophet, Mohammed. They had no caste system and no priests. They were capable of the most savage fanaticism, especially when they thought their religion was in danger.



Their women-folk lived in purdah—that is, they were veiled whenever they went out of their own homes. Unfortunately for the peace of India, Moslems and Hindus never found it easy to live side by side, and their hatreds were often more bitter than the one-time hatreds of Protestants and Catholics in Europe.

Besides Hindus and Moslems, there were Sikhs, Jains, Parsis and Indian Christians. There were even jungle tribesmen, who were little better than primitive savages. All these belonged to that extraordinary medley, the people of India.

Apart from the religious disagreements, the great problem of India was poverty. Most of the people were peasant cultivators, living in mud-built villages and tilling lots of not more than five acres of ground per family. Some Indians were wealthy—a maharajah in his palace might have an income of millions a year and possess gold and jewellery beyond price. But the vast mass of India's 'voiceless millions' lived at the rate of a few pence per day, and most of them had already hopelessly mortgaged themselves and their lands to professional money-lenders.

This huge country, with its many peoples and faiths, had been won by Britain in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and Britain had treated it like a colony. Roughly speaking, two kinds of government grew up in India. First, there was British India governed directly from London. Second, there were also certain areas which had been allowed to keep their own princely rulers, and these areas formed the native Indian States. British statesmen in the past had assured the Indian people from time to time that they must gradually share in the government of their

country. But the assurances of British statesmen were not enough for Indians who wanted their freedom—Swaraj or Home Rule, as they called it—and wanted it quickly. Many Indians formed themselves into political parties to work for independence, and among these parties the most important was the Indian National Congress.

Most Indians loyally supported Britain during the First World War. The Indian army between 1914 and 1918 distinguished itself in many theatres of fighting. But after the war trouble flared up all over India. There were several riots and strikes in 1919. In April, 1919, a particularly tragic affray occurred in Amritsar, where, at the orders of a British general, troops fired on a crowded political meeting of Indians and killed nearly 400 of them.

The man who rose to the leadership of nationalist India was Gandhi. He was a Hindu born in 1869 in an Indian State near Bombay. He was trained for the law, was partly educated in England, and lived for a time in South Africa. Like many another demagogue of modern times, his youth was not very striking nor distinguished. After Amritsar in 1919 he turned against England, and he gradually became the acknowledged leader not only of great masses of Hindus, who almost worshipped him, but of the National Congress as well. Gandhi was a strict vegetarian, and latterly he always wore a white cotton homespun loin-cloth. He was a



MAHATMA GANDHI, Indian Nationalist leader.

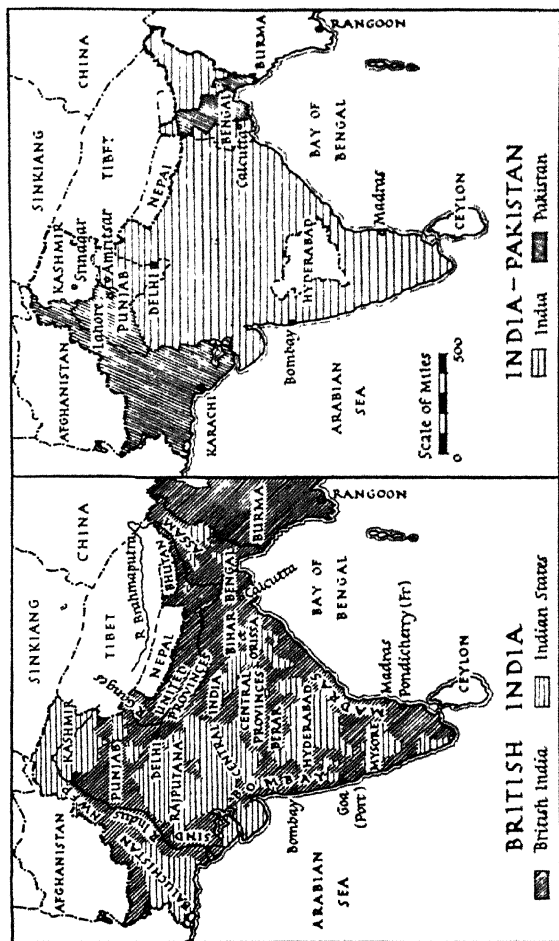
quaint, thin, toothless, bespectacled little man, with a strange, inexplicable but unbounded influence over his own people.

Gandhi's great weapon in the struggle for Indian independence was 'non-co-operation'. It was a sort of General Strike, or boycott—a refusal to pay taxes, to attend schools or law-courts or to buy certain kinds of goods imported from abroad; Gandhi's non-co-operation movements were sometimes very effective and bewildering.

The history of India between the two World Wars is one of increasing difficulties and disagreement. An Act was passed in 1919, which gave partial self-government, but which did not satisfy extreme Indians. The British Government afterwards sent an important commission of inquiry out to India under Sir John Simon; there were two round-table conferences between British and Indian leaders in London, and there was a second Act in 1935.

But at the outbreak of the Second World War the question of Indian independence was still unsolved. British statesmen were more and more taking the view that, if only the Indians would agree among themselves as to the kind of government they really wanted, the question might solve itself. But the Indians never produced any such agreement. The Hindus wanted one thing, the Moslems another. National Congress claimed to speak for all Indians, but the claim was a very doubtful one. Meanwhile it seemed useless for the British Parliament to pass Acts for India, as had been done in 1919 and 1935—Acts which the Indians each time refused to accept.

During the Second World War a new promise of independence was taken out to India by Sir Stafford Cripps, the



In August 1947 British India was transformed into two independent Dominions within the British Commonwealth—India and Pakistan—India being mainly Hindu and Pakistan mainly Moslem. During 1948 Kashmir and Hyderabad were incorporated into India. Since October 1947 Burma has been an independent Union, with a Republican form of government, outside the British Commonwealth.

only condition being that the promise should not become effective till the war and the threat of the Japanese invasion were over. But the Cripps offer at the time led to nothing. It was two years after the Second World War, in August 1947, that a settlement was reached at last. India was divided into two Dominions, a Hindu Dominion called 'India' and a Moslem Dominion called 'Pakistan'.

#### EMPIRE AND COMMONWEALTH

Perhaps the most important event in our imperial history during the past twenty-five years was the passing of the Statute of Westminster in 1931, though it was an event little known to British people. The original Statute is written in involved, legal language which does not concern us, but its general meaning and purpose were clear enough. By the Statute of Westminster the British Dominions—that is, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa—were made independent and became free and separate nations.

British statesmen in years gone by always wished and hoped that these Dominions would govern themselves, and, in fact, the Dominions in recent times have all actually done so. South Africa had become a self-governing Dominion in 1910. The Dominions entered the First World War in 1914 as independent States, each recruited its own army under its own command, each sat separately at the Peace Conference of Paris, each signed the Treaty of Versailles, and each became a member of the League of Nations.

During the First World War the word Commonwealth came to replace the word Empire, which had always been used formerly. The new word had a far less imperialistic sense. When the First World War was over it was gener-

ally expected that the British Parliament would pass an Act putting the whole matter of Dominion status within the Commonwealth in clear and proper form. And this is what the Statute of Westminster in 1931 was meant to do.

Yet to-day there is still a good deal of loose talk about the Dominions. Some people, who should know better, do not even distinguish between a Dominion, which governs itself, and a colony, which is still governed from London. In our atlases the Commonwealth is always coloured red, and thoughtlessly we assume that all these territories are of the same kind. We hear people saying again and again that Canada 'belongs to England' or that an Australian is a 'colonial'. We hope that readers of this book will avoid these very ignorant and tactless mistakes.

The Dominions—Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa—are united in sentiment, they value and are proud of the British connection, they bear 'allegiance' to the King of England, but in every other way they are free nations. They 'belong' to no one but themselves. They are 'freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations'.

## CHAPTER 12

### THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

#### ISOLATIONISM

**I**SOLATIONISM used always to be strong in the United States. That is to say, the American people believed in living their own lives in their own way, isolated as far as

possible from outside interference. The American people were mostly descended from immigrants who had left their original European homes and sailed across the seas, leaving poverty and persecution behind them. They turned their faces to new horizons hoping to find there better, happier and more prosperous homes. We cannot understand the attitude of the American people in recent years unless we realise how much their fathers feared and hated the Europe they had left and how much they wished to keep their own country free thereafter from European influences. Americans always thought of Europe as a place of old-fashioned tyranny, given up to constant wars. By their own War of Independence in the eighteenth century they had cut themselves loose for ever, as they thought, from European entanglements.

During the First World War, therefore, a great change had to come over American opinion before the American people were ready to take part in a war which had begun in Europe and which they always considered was largely a European affair. But when German submarines started sinking American ships they had no alternative but to fight back, and at last, in April, 1917, as we have told in Chapter 3\*, the United States declared war on Germany.

Once the First World War was over, the American people tended to swing back to their former isolationism. President Wilson went to Paris in 1919 to take part in the Peace Conference; the terms of peace were largely founded upon his own Fourteen Points; the League of Nations was largely his work. But the American people by that time had had enough of war, they had had enough of Europe, they

\* Pages 34-36.

put the blame for the First World War upon what they thought to be the wickedness of European politicians, and when President Wilson came back from Paris to the United States a great majority of the American people turned against him. Wilson died a broken man over the failure of the ideals for which he had stood at Paris. The American Senate did not ratify the Treaty of Versailles, and the treaty of assistance, which Wilson at that time had promised France, was allowed to lapse. The United States never became a member of the League of Nations or of the World Court. We may consider to-day that the American people in all this were wrong; we may believe that isolationism is no longer possible in the modern world. But such were once the views of the American people, and they held those views with passionate conviction.

#### THE ALLIED DEBT QUESTION

Harding became President of the United States in 1920. Coolidge became President on Harding's death in 1923, and was re-elected for a second term in 1924. Hoover became President in 1928. The whole period from 1920 to 1928 was a period of great prosperity in America. Money flowed, stocks boomed. There was one motor-car to every fourth person. Everyone was getting rich quickly, and nobody worried about the future. The United States had become on a far larger scale and in a far shorter time what England had become after the wars with Napoleon. She was a young, growing country, and she had just made the decisive contribution to a great victory. She was creditor to all the world.

All through this period from 1920 to 1928 the United



States was strongly isolationist. But however isolationist she might want to be, there were two big international questions in which she could hardly help taking an interest. First, the United States was interested in disarmament. We have already spoken of the Washington Conference, which President Harding called at the end of 1921, which limited the numbers and sizes of battleships which the great naval Powers should be allowed to keep.\* Second, she was also interested in the settlement of the war-time debts which the European countries owed her.

During the First World War, and especially during the latter half of it, the Allies had borrowed immense sums of money from the United States, and the United States had manufactured quantities of war munitions for them at her own expense. During the Second World War the United States did the same again, but did it under the famous Lend-Lease Act. During the First World War Allied borrowing had all been an ordinary commercial transaction as between borrower and lender. Lending money for the purchase of arms in time of war was perfectly regular, and had happened in times of war before. But never had such huge sums been lent, and when the First World War was ended the Allies owed the United States over £2,000,000,000. No one at that time had any idea of the extraordinary difficulties which would be encountered in paying back such a sum of money.

The sum could not be paid in gold. There was not enough gold in the world. Nor, if the truth were told, did the United States really want to have piles of useless gold dumped down upon her. The sum could not be paid in

\* Pages 76-77 and 163-164.

goods. For every ship or gun or aeroplane which the American factories had built for the Allies during the war, the Allies could have paid back a ship or gun or aeroplane or any other suitable product when peace had been restored. But neither did the United States want these things. To have taken them would have put out of work the thousands of Americans who otherwise would have made the things themselves. In fact, in 1922 Congress passed an Act to prevent European countries from selling too much of certain kinds of goods in the United States.

A further complication was that many of the Allied debtors, after the exhaustion of the war, were too poor to pay—or thought themselves too poor to pay—their debts. The French, for example, constantly argued that they could only pay back in American debts such amounts as they themselves received from German reparations. In this way the whole question of Allied debts was mixed up with the question of German reparations.

But even this was not the end of the story. The United States found herself with plenty of ready money in hand. Germany, defeated and exhausted, wanted money to start rebuilding her industries. So American bankers began to lend their ready money to Germany. Germany in turn used a good part of this money to pay reparations to the Allies, and the Allies then used the German reparations to pay their debts to the United States. Gradually, during the period from 1920 and 1928, a circle of payments was set up. Americans lent money to Germany; Germany paid reparations to the Allies; the Allies paid their debts to the United States. It is said that some £150,000,000 went through this strange financial roundabout every year.

The situation may seem absurd, and certainly it was very dangerous. But by the commercial standards of the day it was perfectly regular and proper. The full consequences were not foreseen.

#### THE GREAT CRASH OF 1929

The financial roundabout crashed in 1929. The event was very sudden, and it caught the world unawares. In 1929 the countries of the world, far from expecting a crash, were all showing distinct signs of recovering from the war. The times were more hopeful than they had been for years. The Locarno Pact in 1925 and the Pact of Paris in 1928 had created good feeling and new confidence. Nowhere was prosperity more flourishing than in the United States. Hoover became President of the United States at the end of 1928. "We are steadily building up a new race, a new civilisation, great in its own attainments," he said in his inaugural Presidential address. "Ours is a land rich in resources, stimulating in its glorious beauty, filled with millions of happy homes, blessed with comfort and opportunity. I have no fear for the future of our country. It is bright with hope."

And then suddenly in October, 1929, all these dreams vanished. Clearly the Americans had been speculating too heavily on their stock exchange; American banks had been lending unwisely; American shops and stores had been selling too much on the 'instalment plan'; there were many very complicated reasons for the financial crash which now took place. But it has been calculated that Americans lost £8,000,000,000 in the course of a few weeks. The bottom dropped out of the market, as the saying goes. Huge

fortunes disappeared over-night, and left their former owners bankrupt. American business was rather like a man in boastful good health who has been struck down by a mysterious illness which he never expected and does not understand. At the end of 1930 there were 7,500,000 American workers unemployed. Factories were closed; farmers could not sell their produce; the savings of many a 'forgotten man' were lost; banks failed. It was a fearful catastrophe. The Depression, as we call it now, had begun.

The effects of the Great Crash in the United States were not immediately felt abroad. They were felt first in Germany. The Americans, who had lost their money at home, naturally had none now to lend abroad, and the Germans, who had been borrowing American money in the happy expectation of always being able to borrow more, now found their source of supplies suddenly cut off. By 1931 Germany was facing general bankruptcy. Everyone with money invested in the country was trying to withdraw it. Big business houses and insurance companies in Berlin, Düsseldorf, Hamburg and other great German cities were failing. In June, 1931, the situation was so serious that President Hoover proposed that for a year there should be a general halt in the payment of all international debts and reparations. In other words, he proposed a holiday, or Moratorium, during which there should be no more financial roundabouts.

In the end, at an international conference held at Lausanne in June, 1932, it was agreed that German reparations, except for a purely nominal amount, should be paid no more. By 1933 most of the old Allies were defaulting on their

American debts. Finland alone continued to pay for some years.

The Depression was now world-wide. Some figures are striking. For instance, American steel production stood at one-tenth of its normal capacity. Canadian wheat was at the lowest price for any wheat since the time of Queen Elizabeth. In Brazil the coffee crop could not be sold, and tons of it were burned or dumped into the sea. National incomes in many countries were cut to less than half. International trade shrank to one-third of what it had been. People in these days talked about 'poverty in the midst of plenty'. But no one quite knew what had gone wrong. Thirty millions of workers were said to be unemployed all over the world.

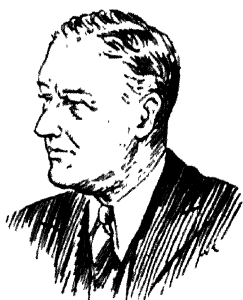
#### THE TURN FROM ISOLATIONISM

The real lesson of the Great Crash of 1929 was that the United States could isolate herself no longer from the rest of the world. Whether the American people liked it or not, their own prosperity was bound up with the prosperity of Germany and with the prosperity of other countries.

Roosevelt became President of the United States at the end of 1932, and he remained President for four terms till his death in 1945. In 1933 he set about a big programme of laws designed to cure the Depression in the United States. He called it the 'New Deal'. Huge sums of money were lent by the Government for the recovery of business and for public works. Various trade agreements were made with countries abroad.

But for us the bigger interest of Roosevelt's period in office was his foreign policy, especially in view of the new

aggressive spirit which at this time, as we shall have to tell in coming chapters, was beginning to be shown by certain countries—Germany, Italy and Japan. Here, too, in a very real sense, was a new deal. But the change took place very slowly, and then largely under the pressure of circumstances.



First, America entirely revised her attitude towards Soviet Russia. Since the Bolshevik revolution in

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT,  
President of the United States,  
1933-1945.

1917, the United States had never 'recognised' Soviet Russia, whose Communist philosophy most Americans heartily detested. But in the winter of 1933 Litvinov went to Washington as special Soviet envoy. There were several grand speeches and dinners, and thenceforth the United States and Soviet Russia began to regard each other as good friends. The Russians promised that they would spread no Communist propaganda in the United States and would give protection to American citizens who might travel in their country.

Next came Roosevelt's 'Good Neighbour Policy' towards South America and Mexico. In a series of important conferences Roosevelt began to build up a solid understanding between the United States and Latin America. He was evidently working towards a sort of Pan-American League of Nations, and he would probably have succeeded in his aims but for the opposition of the Argentine, where German influence was then especially strong. At all events, when the Second World War broke

out in 1939, the United States had made several good and reliable friendships in her hemisphere.

But the United States was still shy and cautious in her relations with Europe. The Allied debt defaults, which we have mentioned, angered and disgusted most Americans, nor did Americans always understand the extreme difficulties in Europe which had brought those defaults about. In Chapter 16 we shall describe Germany's rearmament, Italy's war in Abyssinia, Hitler's march into the Rhineland, and the Spanish Civil War. But these events at first only convinced the majority of Americans that isolationism was still their safest policy, and that the farther they kept out of all the crises and wars of Europe the better for themselves. The American Congress at this time passed a number of Neutrality Acts, mainly intended to prevent American firms from shipping munitions in American ships to European nations at war.

But Hitler had now come to power in Germany, Japan was fighting China, Mussolini was blustering on his balcony and uttering fearful threats of war. President Roosevelt felt that he must prepare his country to withstand the growing tide of aggression which he clearly saw was beginning to arise in the world. In particular he felt that democratic countries abroad, in case of need, must be able to draw upon American help. Thus the last of the Neutrality Acts in 1937 was the famous 'Cash and Carry' Act, which allowed any nation to buy American goods (other than arms), provided that it paid for them and provided that it carried them away in its own ships. The Act was clearly to the advantage of democratic countries who were also naval Powers, such as Britain and France.

President Roosevelt made several important speeches from time to time which were plain warnings to aggressor nations. In 1937, for instance, he hinted that aggressor nations might have to be 'quarantined'. In 1938 he said, "The United States would not stand idly by if domination of Canadian soil is threatened by another empire." In April, 1939, he made an appeal to Hitler and to Mussolini to give him definite assurances that neither would attack thirty nations whose names he listed. "You have repeatedly asserted," he said to Hitler, "that you and the German people have no desire for war. If this is true there need be no war."

By the time the Second World War broke out there were therefore many signs that President Roosevelt and the American people were fully realising that the old policy of isolation for the United States might no longer be workable.

## CHAPTER 13

### THE FAR EAST

#### THE CHINESE REVOLUTION

THE history of modern China begins in 1911. In that year the old Chinese Empress died, and the Manchu Empire, which had held sway in China for nearly three centuries but had long since outlived its strength and usefulness, finally collapsed amid riots and revolts throughout the country.

China's revolution, however, was very different from



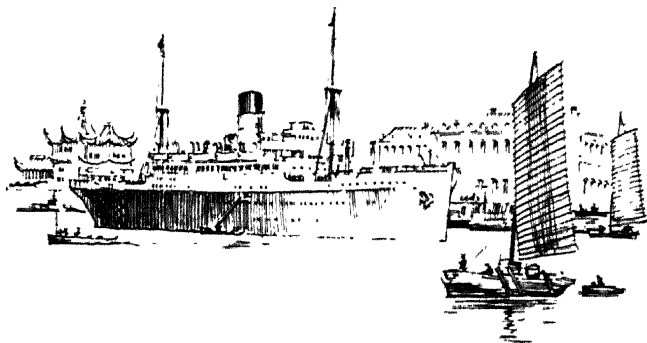
many another revolution which we have described in this book. It was less revolution than anarchy. China had had such periods of anarchy before in her long history. Rival war-lords sprang up in every province, resembling nothing so much as the robber barons of mediæval Europe, leading their ragged, hireling bands up and down the country and holding the common people to ransom.

Only gradually in south China, particularly around the city of Canton, could it be said that a genuine revolutionary movement with any sort of popular support had begun to form. The movement was headed by that remarkable man, Dr. Sun Yat-sen, leader of the Nationalist Party, or Kuomintang. Dr. Sun was determined that China should be independent, that she should be democratic, and that she should be able to provide every one of her many millions with a decent livelihood, and to these ends he devoted his life and all the resources of his party.

In 1917, during the First World War, a nominal government, then ruling in Peking and much under the control of the local war-lords in north China, declared war on Germany on behalf of all China. Dr. Sun and his followers in the south had little sympathy for the war and took little part in it. Nor had China much say at the Peace Conference at Paris, except to protest vigorously when Japan seized all the former German possessions in China. The attitude of the other Powers at the Peace Conference at Paris was that nothing could be expected of China while she was torn asunder by the wretched, miserable fighting of her rival war-lords, and indeed it certainly seemed then as if China would remain in a state of confusion and misrule for many years to come.

## THE CHINESE NATIONALIST GOVERNMENT

But a far bigger and deeper problem in China than the fighting of rival war-lords was the dreadful poverty of her people. She had a population of 400,000,000, and she was a vast country of small cultivators, somewhat like India. Of these millions 95 per cent were illiterate. They still tilled



OLD AND NEW IN THE FAR EAST

The mixture of shipping and architecture in a typical Chinese sea port of to-day.  
(See the drawing on p. 124.)

their meagre fields with wooden ploughs and bamboo rakes such as their ancestors had used for centuries; they still suffered from time to time from the age-old disasters of drought and flood, famine and plague. Such industries as they had were at the handicraft stage.

Foreign influence and foreign money might have helped China. But the foreigner came to China for purposes of trade, not charity. All through the later years of the old Manchu Empire, when the country was weak and defence-

less, the foreigner had found China an easy prey. British, Germans, French, Russians, Portuguese, Americans and Japanese had traded at will and on their own terms; they had extorted treaties to their own advantage; they had been granted 'concessions' in the most favourable ports and trading posts; they had built their docks, their warehouses, their banks; they had run the customs and policed the rivers; they had fought their little wars—in short, they had treated China unashamedly as their colony.

Certainly in these years the foreigner had brought wealth to some. In the new 'European' cities, like Shanghai and Hong Kong, a new class of wealthy Chinese merchant had grown up who traded with the foreigner and used his methods. Certainly, too, in these years the foreigner, especially the American, had brought to China the knowledge of the new sciences, of medicine and engineering, and had built up in China missions, schools, universities and hospitals. But the people of China as a whole had remained ignorant and poor, and it is not surprising, perhaps, that they thought of their visitors as 'foreign devils'.

Dr. Sun Yat-sen in Canton knew these things well enough. But Dr. Sun was no Stalin who could have changed it all with some Five-Year Plan. He knew that China must have the foreigner on her soil, but that the foreigner must give her intelligent and sympathetic help. Especially must advanced nations, like America and Britain, be encouraged to invest money in China, develop her resources and send her trained technical men, but they must be encouraged to do so without trying to put her under any sort of colonial control.

One foreign Power whose help Dr. Sun tried to get was

Soviet Russia. Like China, Soviet Russia was then a country in revolution, and, like China, Soviet Russia was also resisting 'imperialist' Powers which were trying to exploit her. China and Russia ought to have been good friends. But in China, as in Europe, there were many men who disliked and feared the Soviet revolution, and when Dr. Sun reached his agreement with Russia these men had actually driven him out of Canton and forced him to go into exile.

In the end Russian help to China was never very much and did not last long. But one result of it was the founding of a Chinese military college at Whampoa near Canton, staffed by Russian army instructors. The principal of the college was a young Chinese soldier, Chiang Kai-shek, who had travelled and studied in Japan and Russia. Dr. Sun died in 1925, and it was evident that this soldier would be his successor in the leadership of Nationalist China.

The Chinese cadets at Whampoa learned their lesson well. In 1926 Chiang Kai-shek was already marching at their head determined to cross swords with the robber war-lords in the north and to beat them at their own game. Chiang advanced from Canton and took the big industrial city of Hankow. He then wheeled right and swept down the valley of the River Yangtze to Nanking, and there at Nanking in 1927 he set up the future capital of Nationalist China. At no point



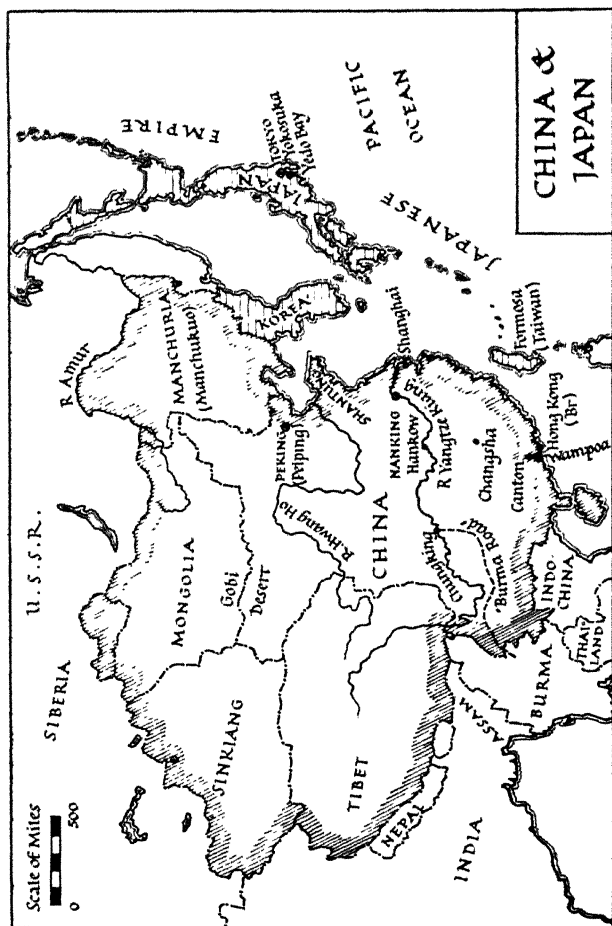
CHIANG KAI-SHEK, Chinese Nationalist leader and Generalissimo.

in his long march had anyone been able to stand in his way.

But Chiang did not rest satisfied. He wanted to liberate all China, both from the robber war-lords within and from the foreign devils without. He even turned against his recent Russian friends. Strengthened by success, he felt he could do without them, and the Russian army instructors at Whampoa, much to their dismay, were sent packing back to Moscow.

Russian influence was thus largely eliminated from China, but it remained strong in remote parts of the country. A Chinese Red Army afterwards came into existence in far north-western China, where it received supplies direct from Soviet Russia and where it formed almost an independent State of its own, often in opposition to the rest of Nationalist China.

Meanwhile, in 1928, Chiang Kai-shek's armies reached and captured the old northern capital at Peking—a city which he renamed Peiping, or 'Northern Peace'. Firmly established in his new government at Nanking, Chiang set about the reconstruction of his war-torn country. He made huge purchases of machinery from abroad, especially from Britain and America. The city of Nanking itself, partially destroyed when Chiang had captured it, was rebuilt by American architects. A German general and his staff took the place of the Russian army instructors at Whampoa. It seemed for a moment as if the Chinese revolution was over; most of the robber war-lords had been defeated and driven out, and their armies disbanded: a long period of peace was in prospect. With foreign help and the devoted efforts of the Chinese people themselves, Dr. Sun's dream of



The frontiers shown are those of 1931. In that year the Japanese invaded Manchuria, took it under their control and re-named it Manchukuo. In 1937 they began their attempted conquest of all China.

an independent, democratic and prosperous China might well come true.

But all these fair hopes were dashed by Japan.

#### THE RISE OF MODERN JAPAN

Time was when Japan had been a mysterious, hermit empire where no white man had ever set foot. She was ruled by a caste of feudal warriors who hated the foreigner and who desired nothing so much as to preserve their sacred soil from foreign ways and foreign influences. The Emperor of Japan called himself the Son of Heaven, and was heir to a dynasty that had sat on the throne for twenty-five centuries.

But in 1853 the American Commodore Perry sailed into Yedo Bay at the head of a small fleet of warships, and partly by threats and partly by gifts he persuaded the Japanese to sign a treaty opening their country to trade. But the Japanese had no desire that this should be the same sort of treaty which had enabled foreign Powers to gain the controls they had gained in China. It was not to be the beginning of new 'concessions' to the foreign devils. Japan was determined to be wiser than China. She would trade with the foreigner, she would learn his skills and sciences, but she would not become his colony.

Thus Japan began to modernise herself. She borrowed; she studied; she took what she wanted. She modelled her army on that of Germany, her navy on that of Britain, her system of laws and law-courts on that of France. Her men and women wore European styles of clothes. Her cities were adorned with American types of buildings. She mined coal and iron; she developed huge industries.

Fifty years after Yedo Bay she was a great Power herself. She had an alliance with Britain. She waged successful wars against China and Russia. In 1914 she entered the First World War on the side of the Allies and seized all Germany's possessions in China and in the northern Pacific Ocean. Never before in the world's history had such a spectacular transformation occurred in any nation.

#### THE WASHINGTON CONFERENCE AND AFTER

The other Powers of the world, especially Britain and the United States, began to fear the might which Japan seemed to be gathering together and the aggressive attitude she seemed to be adopting. At the end of the First World War, when all the world wanted peace, this new, powerful and growing nation was showing far too many signs of war, and she was clearly threatening a big naval 'armaments race'. For a time she kept troops in eastern Siberia. She looked as if she was preparing an invasion of Manchuria and China.

In 1921 President Harding of the United States called together at Washington a conference of all the nations who had interests in the Pacific Ocean. There were nine nations in all—the United States, Britain, Japan, France, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, Portugal and China—and the conference has sometimes been called the Nine-Power Conference. President Harding hoped that he might reach a complete settlement of Pacific problems, and in particular that a halt could be called to the naval armaments race before it was too late. It was this conference which, as we said in Chapter 6\*, scrapped thousands of tons of warships



and limited the numbers and sizes of the bigger warships which the United States, Britain and Japan were to have. The Japanese considered the whole conference was a trick to force them to cut their claws, but they were in a minority of one against eight, and they were far from ready to bid defiance to great Powers like the United States and Britain. In the end the Japanese agreed to do as the conference demanded. President Harding hailed 'the naval holiday' which the Washington Conference had made possible. But under the surface Japan was as restless and as ambitious as before.

For a moment, however, another event absorbed all Japan's attention. In 1923 she suffered one of the worst disasters in her history. On September 1 of that year a terrible earthquake, followed by fire, destroyed three-quarters of her capital, Tokyo, and a large part of her most important naval base, Yokosuka. Broken water-mains prevented the fire services from bringing the fires under control. Flimsy wooden buildings were burned to ashes. Some 160,000 persons are said to have lost their lives. American and British ships rushed food and medical supplies to the stricken cities. It was years before the damage was repaired.

But in 1928 Chiang Kai-shek had marched his forces to Peking in north China and had begun to extend his influence into Manchuria, a territory over which Japan had already cast a greedy eye. In 1928 Chinese and Japanese troops in Shantung actually clashed for the first time. Japan was clearly recovering from her disaster of 1923 and taking a renewed interest in the rich and tempting lands that lay across the sea in Asia.

## DESIGN FOR CONQUEST

Then in 1929, as we have already described in Chapter 12\*, occurred the Great Crash in the United States. Like every other country, Japan was hard hit by the Depression that followed. Her exports abroad, such as her silk, began to decline. In twelve months she lost a third of her overseas trade. She had perhaps 3,000,000 unemployed or semi-unemployed workers. The Depression played right into the hand of the war-party in Japan. Fire-eating soldier-politicians—Tanaka, Araki, Kato and others like them -- could see no way of bursting out of the ever-narrowing circle of the country's economic difficulties except by the sword, and they began to dangle before the hungry imaginations of the Japanese people visions of a new world—a Co-Prosperity Sphere in East Asia, to give their name for it—won and dominated by themselves.

But also, as a result of the Depression, the United States and Britain were so beset with troubles in their own homes that they could no longer concern themselves, as they had done till then, with Pacific problems, and Japan found herself at this moment able to pursue her ambitions free from possible interference from the two great Powers with strength enough to stop her.

In 1931 Japan overran Manchuria. It was the first step towards what was to be, in the coming years, her attempted conquest of China and of all East Asia.

\* Pages 150-152.

## CHAPTER 14

### NAZI GERMANY

#### THE COMING OF HITLER AND THE NAZI PARTY

**A**DOLF HITLER was born in 1889 in the little Austrian town of Braunau. He was the son of a village cobbler who had become a Customs official. He was an independent, morose sort of boy, always at odds with his father and schoolmasters. But he seems to have been fond of his mother, and she probably pampered him shamelessly.

As a young man Hitler seemed to have had no particular talents or prospects. At one time he wanted to be a painter, at another time an architect. Once he worked as a paperhanger. No doubt he lived in great poverty and wretchedness, wandering through Vienna and Munich.

The outbreak of the First World War gave him an object in life. Though Austrian by origin, he volunteered for service in the German army. War was in his blood, and he loved every hour of it. As far as we know, he made a good and brave soldier. At the armistice in 1918 he lay in hospital, gassed and almost blinded.

Discharged from hospital, he took up politics. He went to meetings, discovered a gift for public speaking, and joined various clubs and groups like the Free Corps we mentioned in Chapter 7\*. He found other men of the same views as himself—men embittered by the defeat of their country, smarting with the sense of injustice and humiliation. Soon he began to build up a political party of his own.

\* Pages 80-81.

Even to-day Hitler's astonishing success is difficult to understand. But we must remember that Germany about the year 1920 was a strange, unnatural sort of country, as every defeated country must be—a country where surprises were to be expected, a country of many political rebels and cranks.



Hitler's party was named the National Socialist Party and nicknamed the Nazi Party. The word 'Nazi' was an abbreviation of the party's name (*National-Sozialistisch*). By 1921 the party was fully organised, holding meetings, parading the streets, recruiting members. Within it were special bodies of troopers—the Black Shirts or S.S. (*Schutzstaffel*)—who became Hitler's personal bodyguard, and the Brown Shirts or S.A. (*Sturmabteilung*), whose job it was to protect party meetings and to wreck the meetings of opponents. The party had its newspaper. It had its headquarters in Munich. It had for its badge the swastika. Its members saluted each other with the regular Fascist salute with the outstretched right arm.

With Hitler were a number of men whose names have since become famous. There was Hermann Göring, one of Germany's ace airmen in the First World War, who afterwards became the Nazi Air Minister and Reichsmarschall, enormously stout, always in uniform and covered with medals. There was Josef Goebbels, originally a journalist, a small, dark man with a limp, who afterwards became the Nazi Minister of Propaganda. There was

ADOLF HITLER, the Nazi Führer and German Chancellor, 1933-1945.



HERMANN GÖRING, Nazi Air Minister and Reichsmarschall.

Heinrich Himmler, Chief of the S.S. and later of the Gestapo, perhaps the most dangerous man of them all. There was Rudolf Hess, one of the principal party organisers, who at one time, it was thought, would have succeeded Hitler.

It is hard to say exactly what Hitler believed. His party, as its name implied, was nationalist and socialist. If anything, Hitler's beliefs changed from time to time. He adopted any belief he found useful. But he made the most of all the miseries and discontents which Germans felt in those days, and he was eager to convince his listeners :

that the German army had never really been beaten in 1918;

that Germany had been tricked into signing a disgraceful peace at Versailles;

that the real authors of Germany's downfall in 1918 were the Jews and Communists, who had treacherously stabbed her in the back;

that Germany, once she could become united and strong again, would fight her way back to her lost place in the world;

that the German people were a Master Race (*Herrenvolk*), destined to rule over lesser breeds of men, and deserving wider territories for their living-space (*Lebensraum*).

But, whatever Hitler may have believed, his methods for getting what he wanted were cruel and violent. Long before the world had heard of the worst the Nazis could do, his troopers were brawling in the streets, beating their opponents and generally creating mischief. The Nazis had no use for what we call democracy; they despised the freedom which the democracies have always cherished; their way was the way of fear and force.

The Nazi Party first drew widespread attention to itself in 1923 at the time of the French invasion of the Ruhr. In November of that year Hitler tried to bring off a revolution of his own and to set up a new German government in Munich. A small contingent of Nazis marched through the streets of Munich and fought a short, sharp skirmish with the police, in which several of them were killed. Hitler himself escaped with a broken arm. His revolution collapsed. He was afterwards arrested, and spent the best part of a year imprisoned in a fortress, where he used his hours of idleness to dictate most of his book, *Mein Kampf*.

#### HITLER AND THE NAZIS IN POWER

Hitler had attempted a revolution in 1923. But few people then took Hitler very seriously. In 1923 the Nazis could still be considered as just another example of the general moral sickness of defeated Germany. But Hitler bided his time, and his time came after 1929. He flourished on other people's troubles. His opportunity was the Depression. Stresemann died in October, 1929, and almost at once it seemed that the hopeful phase of Germany's history in this inter-war period had come to an end. The Great Crash in the United States, which we described in



JOSEPH GOEBBELS, Nazi Propaganda Minister.

Chapter 12\*, stopped all American loans to Germany. President Hoover's Moratorium gave a short spell of relief, but already the financial situation in Germany was out of control. Several important German businesses and banks went bankrupt. In 1931 there were 6,000,000 German workers unemployed.

In their despair the Germans began to look to Hitler, the one man who promised to help them. At an election held in September, 1930, the Nazis won more than 100 seats in the German parliament--the Reichstag--and all of a sudden a party which had once been no better than a gang of rowdies became one of the big political forces in Germany. Hitler had made his first real stride to power.

In Chapter 7 † we described the Weimar Constitution in Germany. But Hitler was proving himself more than a match for all those men in Germany who had tried to stand by democratic principles. He was utterly unscrupulous. His amazing oratory and propaganda worked on everybody's passions. He made use of anyone he could, and dropped him without hesitation or thanks after he had got what he wanted. He showed extraordinary skill in the way he could twist people of all sorts and conditions to his purpose. He pretended to be a friend of the workers, of the army veterans, of the big bankers and industrialists, of the army generals. Actually he was friend to no one but his

\* Pages 150-151.

† Page 79.

own power and ambition. His main support came from the huge mass of younger men in Germany, many of them unemployed, all of them full of grievances against a world which they thought had done them an ill turn. To all of them he made promises, and all of them he deceived.

In January, 1932, Brüning, the last Chancellor of the Weimar Republic, resigned. A year followed in which Hitler and his rivals struggled to seize control. Hindenburg was still President - a very old man hardly understanding what was taking place around him. Hindenburg himself would have preferred to see Germany ruled by the old aristocratic class, and for most of the year 1932 a so-called 'Barons' Cabinet' was in fact in power.

The Nazi Party was now nearly 1,000,000 strong and growing like an avalanche. On January 30, 1933, Hindenburg at last invited Hitler to become Chancellor and take over the government of Germany. Hindenburg and his Barons thought that, perhaps by putting Hitler in a position of responsibility, they might succeed in taming him, and perhaps also that he might ruin himself by making some serious blunder. Certainly it was hard to imagine that a man of obscure birth, a lance-corporal in the First World War, and a rather disreputable political agitator since, could ever rule a great nation—much less be its dictator and Führer.

However, that dictator and Führer Hitler now became. Once in power, he was not one easily to be ousted again. The night of January 30, 1933, was one wild Nazi celebration. Seven hundred thousand of his faithful followers marched past Hitler through the streets of Berlin, carrying torches and banners. During the next weeks Hitler began





HEINRICH HIMMLER, Chief of  
the Nazi S.S. and Gestapo.

to give Germany some idea of what a Nazi government meant. One decree followed another, and a willing, fanatic army of Nazi troopers was always ready to see that the decrees were instantly carried out.

Hitler called his programme 'co-ordination', and he soon 'co-ordinated' the whole life of Germany. The Nazi Party became the one and only party in the land. The other parties were forbidden. The civil service, the police, the courts of law, labour, trade and industry, education, the newspapers, the cinema, literature and the fine arts were all Nazified. The old German States, which still enjoyed a good deal of local self-government, surrendered their rights and privileges. A special Nazi secret police—the terrible Gestapo—was built up. Hundreds of Jews and Communists were arrested and thrown into concentration camps. Hardly any resistance was offered anywhere. Perhaps the only bodies in Germany which were able to keep a little of their independence were the Churches. At the same time, Hitler started a huge rearmament programme, and all the big German industries were gradually turned over to the making of guns, tanks and aeroplanes.

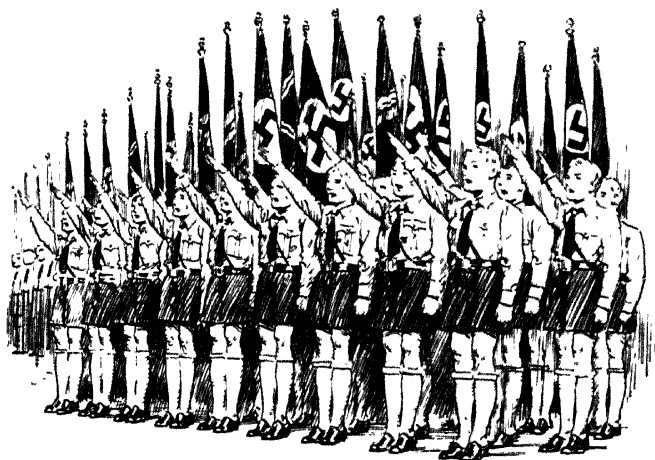
Only once, in June, 1934, did some of Hitler's followers attempt to revolt against him. But he struck first, and in one short week he probably caused to be killed about 1000 of them. Afterwards the revolt came to be called the Night of the Long Knives.

In August, 1934, President von Hindenburg died. Hitler was left alone with full power in Germany. Nazism had triumphed all along the line.

#### THE REAL MEANING OF NAZISM

The Nazi revolution was certainly one of the most extraordinary events of our extraordinary time. Yet, looking back upon it, we must confess that we still do not understand the full meaning of it. We still ask ourselves, as we did on the first page of this book, how did these things come about?

On the surface, Nazism was a desperate struggle on the part of the German people to win back their self-respect



A PARADE OF HITLER YOUTH

Both Nazism in Germany and Fascism in Italy systematically educated their boys and girls in their political doctrines.

and their lost power and position in the world. For a proud, vigorous, naturally war-like people such a struggle might well take violent forms. Clearly Germany was suffering from a feeling of deep humiliation as the result of her defeat in 1918, and to that humiliation was afterwards added economic depression, ruined trade and mass unemployment. In the circumstances some sort of explosion was bound to take place.

If these things alone had been the cause of Nazism, it might almost have had our sympathy. But they did not explain or excuse the many savage cruelties the Nazis practised, the way they crushed all personal liberty in Germany, their bad faith, their breach of treaties solemnly entered into, the way they debased education and culture, the way they glorified war. Here was the side of Nazism that was so profoundly destructive of everything we most valued. Here was the side of it that had to be resisted, fought and utterly defeated if the civilisation we knew was to survive.

All we can really say is that something must have gone very wrong with the world to have allowed a thing like Nazism ever to have come about in the first place, and that the world is going to need all our work and faith if it is to be set to rights again. Let us surely hope that we shall be equal to the great opportunity which, for a second time, our victory and peace have now given us.

## CHAPTER 15

### CRISIS IN THE FAR EAST

#### THE COMING OF THE GREAT CRISES

THE inter-war period lasted just twenty years—from the Peace Conference of Paris in 1919 to the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939. Some writers have called it the Twenty Years' Armistice. The Great Crash in the United States in 1929 divides the period exactly into two halves. The first half, from 1919 to 1929, could be called the Period of Settlement, when, for a time, it seemed as if the world would settle down gradually to ways of peace and progress. The second half, from 1929 to 1939, could be called the Period of Crisis, when the hope of peace was lost and when the world seemed always to exist in a state of fear and trembling from one crisis to another.

The Great Crash in the United States was the beginning of the Depression, and the signal for all sorts of troubles to arise in the world. We have already spoken of the Depression in Europe, and especially in Germany\*. In the Far East the Depression was the direct cause of the Manchurian Crisis of 1931 and of Japan's decisions to launch out upon her career of conquest.

Japan was in an expanding, impatient mood. She believed she had been denied many of the good things of life which other older nations possessed in abundance. She wanted trade; she wanted employment for her millions of workers living overcrowded in her narrow island home;

\* Pages 150-152.

she wanted to control and exploit rich territories abroad. And now had come a world-wide Depression which had robbed her of the little prosperity she had. But the Depression was also her opportunity. While other nations were struggling with their own economic troubles and were too occupied to interfere in her plans, she would quickly strike a first blow for the great Co-Prosperity Sphere in East Asia which she was determined should be hers. So argued the leaders of her war-party, her big business men, her generals and her admirals. In 1931 Japan's invasion of Manchuria accordingly began.

Manchuria once seemed very far away, and at first the crisis there meant very little to Europe or to the rest of the world. But it was soon realised that Japan in 1931 had opened a new phase of aggression and war, and that sooner or later all peoples would be involved in it. What Japan could do in Manchuria other discontented 'have-not' nations could do elsewhere. Thus in 1933 Hitler came to power in Germany, also with ideas of expansion and conquest, and it was not long before he found in Italy a man—Mussolini—with ideas not unlike his own. From 1933 onwards, year by year, crisis followed crisis, now in Germany, now in Abyssinia, now again in Germany, now in Spain, now in China, now in central Europe, until the Second World War broke out. We have vivid memories of those days—how we used to open our newspapers or switch on our wireless, always with the same thought: wondering what new fearful thing we should next hear of.

We still ask ourselves why all these things were allowed to happen. Was there not intelligence and good-will enough in a war-weary world to have prevented them?

Was it not possible for all nations to gain a satisfying standard of prosperity without some of them having to fight and shed blood for it? But, as Japan had rightly guessed, the nations which could have enforced the peace were too much occupied with their economic troubles at home. The great empires of history had not been made by waiting and talking. The League of Nations, which had been set up to meet exactly such a situation of threatening war, was powerless without the genuine, vigorous support which its members, at this great testing-time, never really gave it. Britain, France, the United States, Russia and China, which under the stress of the Second World War formed the main strength of the United Nations, were then far from united. Britain and France, all through the inter-war period and during the Depression particularly, had been constantly at odds with one another. The United States was still frankly isolationist. Russia and China were still countries emerging from revolutions.

Then, of course, there was the deep conviction, which so many of us held in those days, that modern war was so horrible a thing that no nation could be so criminal or so stupid as to resort to it. Unhappily from our point of view, certain ambitious, aggressive, 'have-not' nations, led by desperate men, did not think as we did, and, as time was to show, these nations were willing to take the risk of war and all its horrors to achieve their ends.

Japan, Germany and Italy therefore brought off their aggressions unchecked, and we have during this Period of Crisis, as we have called it, the extraordinary picture of these three nations, all organised as military dictatorships, taking the law into their own hands, while the rest of the world

stood by and watched its very peace and security being stolen from it.

In 1931, then, Japan overran Manchuria. In 1933 Hitler came to power and set about the re-arming of Germany. At the end of 1934 the Abyssinian crisis began. In 1935 Hitler introduced conscription into Germany. In 1936 his troops marched into the Rhineland, and in the summer of that year the Spanish Civil War broke out. In 1937 Japan and China were at open war. In 1938 Hitler invaded Austria, and later forced on France and Britain the humiliating Munich Pact. In 1939 Hitler invaded Poland, and the Second World War began. The whole makes a long catalogue of catastrophe, which it will be for us, in this and the next two chapters, to try to describe.

#### THE MANCHURIAN CRISIS

On the night of September 18, 1931, a few miles from Mukden in Manchuria, a bomb laid by an unknown hand blew up a short stretch of the railway line. One report has it that just thirty inches of the line were destroyed. But big events often grow from small beginnings. In this case there was some shooting between Japanese soldiers then stationed in Mukden and the soldiers of the local Chinese war-lord. Three days later the Japanese overran and occupied the whole of Manchuria. The local Chinese war-lord fled into south China.

Japan had clearly used the bomb outrage as an excuse to put into action a long-prepared plan of invasion. For her troops were now in Manchuria not 'to restore order' and not to chase down the culprits of the outrage, but to take possession of the country. Manchuria by rights was

Chinese territory, and China at once appealed to the League of Nations against Japan's aggression. But no member of the League—except China—was vitally interested in Manchuria. Certainly none considered Manchuria worth a war. China herself, of course, hardly recovered from revolution and just at the start of Chiang Kai-shek's programme of reconstruction, was helpless to act alone.

The League met in anxious sessions, and went through the form of sending a commission of inquiry to Manchuria to find out what had really happened there. The League did little else. But the little it did was enough to make Japan declare that she would tolerate no 'Western meddling' and no 'frivolous thinking' in regard to her affairs in Manchuria, and she gave notice that she would herself withdraw from League membership.

The United States and Britain were the only two Powers which could have interfered effectively. The United States Government did invite Britain to make a joint protest to Japan and not to 'recognise' the Japanese conquest of Manchuria, but the British Government could see no value in such a protest unless it was backed up with a show of force which no one—least of all the United States—was then prepared to make.

Meanwhile Japanese business men and Japanese settlers began to move into Manchuria and to take full possession of it. Under their enterprise it became a land of great wealth and greater promise. They mined its coal and iron, cut its forests, grew wheat, maize and soya beans. The Japanese Government re-named the country Manchukuo, and set up as Regent their own puppet—a young boy,



Henry Pu-yi, a descendant of the old Manchu dynasty which had ruled there before the Chinese Revolution of 1911.

#### ‘THE CHINA INCIDENT’

Japan did not long remain satisfied with her new conquest. In 1933 she invaded and occupied the Chinese Province of Jehol. In 1935 an adventurous Japanese soldier—Colonel Doihara, afterwards called ‘the Japanese Colonel Lawrence’—acting independently of the Japanese Government, but evidently with its full knowledge and sympathy, began to push westwards into Chahar and southwards, past the Great Wall, into Hopeh. Japan, no one could now doubt, was at the outset of a long-term campaign, and, ‘leaf by leaf, like an artichoke’, she would devour all China.

The new and threatening turn of events startled the Chinese themselves into taking measures for their own defence. Weak and unprepared as they were, they must call forth what powers they had. Public meetings and anti-Japanese demonstrations were taking place all over free China. A ‘National Salvation Movement’ was started. Chiang Kai-shek in his capital at Nanking was mustering men and munitions. Even the Chinese Red Army in far north-western China, which had been formerly opposed to Chiang, now sent officers to treat with him and demanded to be led against the Japanese invaders. Help from the United States began to arrive in the form of loans and planes. The stage was set for a full-scale war between China and Japan.

The war started, very much as the Manchurian Crisis had started, almost by accident. On the night of July 7, 1937,

a small detachment of Japanese soldiers on night manoeuvres advanced near the Marco Polo Bridge, not far from Peiping, then held by Chinese. There was a wild exchange of shots, but no one was struck. Next day, however, Japanese infantry and tanks in great numbers began to advance on



CHUNGKING

During China's war with Japan in 1938 Chiang Kai-shek retired to this remote city on the upper Yangtze and made it his capital. He received supplies by the Burma Road. (See the drawing on p. 183.)

Peiping. General fighting broke out between the Chinese and Japanese forces in the area.

No war was ever declared by either side, though, as was soon to appear, it was real war, and deadly serious war. It was the next stage in Japan's conquest of China. The

Japanese afterwards always described it as 'the China Incident'.

It was, however, a very unequal war. Chiang Kai-shek at first probably had as many as 2,000,000 men in the field, including his crack divisions, 'the Generalissimo's Own', recently trained by a German general. But Chiang's equipment was woefully inferior. Japan, by contrast, was a modern industrial nation, which could produce the guns, planes and tanks that a modern army required. Her navy gave her command of the seas round China, and, while all China's sea-ports were thus blockaded, she herself could import war materials from all over the world.

Within a year the Chinese lost most of their northern provinces. Chiang's capital, Nanking, was captured and sacked, and he retired with his headquarters to a new capital at Chungking in the upper reaches of the Yangtze River. No one knows what the Chinese losses were. Probably some 60,000,000 people—more than the population of the British Isles—were driven out of their homes. Vast areas of fertile lands were flooded or 'scorched'. Japanese casualties were said to have been 500,000.

But Chiang declared that he would continue the struggle till the ultimate victory of China. If he could not fight his country's invaders on equal terms in the open field, he could at least harry their outposts and communications. During 1938 an extraordinary kind of warfare developed in China. Wandering Chinese patrols, often using arms they had captured from the Japanese themselves, operated deep behind the Japanese lines, killing and sabotaging wherever they went. It was a terrible, merciless warfare. The Japanese revenged themselves on the helpless Chinese

villagers, who they claimed were feeding and hiding Chinese soldiers.

In the Second World War in Europe this kind of warfare was called a 'resistance movement' or 'partisan movement'. But so effective was it in China that, though the area officially under Japanese occupation looked very large



THE BURMA ROAD

Along this road, built by Chinese coolie labour largely under the direction of American engineers, some supplies were able to reach China after her ports had been occupied by the Japanese.

on the map, real Japanese control hardly extended beyond the sea-ports, the main towns and cities, and the railways. Meanwhile war supplies began to come to blockaded China by means of her 'back-door', along the so-called Burma Road, which was slowly and painfully constructed by Chinese coolie labour through the difficult mountain country behind Chungking.

## CHAPTER 16

### CRISIS IN EUROPE

#### THE RE-ARMAMENT OF GERMANY

UNDER the terms of the Treaty of Versailles in 1919 Germany was to have limited her army to 100,000 men and was forbidden heavy guns, tanks or aeroplanes, and she was to have limited her navy to six small battleships, six light cruisers, twelve other craft—and no submarines. We know now that far more than 100,000 men were under arms in Germany after 1919, and we know that guns, tanks and aeroplanes were being built for the German army in arsenals in Russia, Sweden, Spain and elsewhere. We know, too, that considerable secret planning for re-armament in Germany was done on paper. When Hitler came to power in 1933 he found plans long since prepared for a great German army, navy and air-force. Factories were ready for conversion to armament production. Hitler had only to order all these plans—cautiously and secretly at first—to be put into operation.

In 1933, as we described in Chapter 6\*, a Disarmament Conference was being held in Geneva, under the auspices of the League of Nations, in a heroic attempt to reduce armaments throughout the world. What success the conference might have had it is difficult for us to say, but Hitler wrecked its chances quickly enough. He protested his peaceful intentions, but disarmament was the last thing he really wanted. In October, 1933, Germany withdrew from the Conference, and a few days later she gave notice

\* Pages 77-78.

that she would also withdraw from membership of the League of Nations.

In March, 1935, Hitler deemed the time right to come out into the open, and he announced that Germany was once more to have conscription. His Air Minister, Göring, admitted that Germany already had a powerful air force and was building aeroplanes at an enormous rate. Probably Göring already had 1,000 first-line aeroplanes-- not many by later standards, but quite enough in 1935 to strike terror into the hearts of Germany's neighbours. In April, 1935, the German navy yards suddenly assembled twelve submarines from parts which had been secretly manufactured; two battleships of 26,000 tons apiece were laid down. All these things were done in flagrant violation of the Treaty of Versailles.

Here, then, was Germany, having suffered defeat in the First World War—a defeat which would have permanently weakened any other country—having passed through revolution, financial collapse and depression, once more calling up her tremendous energies and setting out on a programme which was to make her again the strongest military Power in the world. Experts said she would go bankrupt, that she had not the raw materials, that she lacked oil, that she was really bluffing and was not nearly as strong as she appeared. Yet this spectacle of a re-arming Germany was played out before the eyes of an astonished world.

#### BRITAIN IN THE CRISIS

In 1929 Ramsay MacDonald had become Premier of Britain's second Labour Government, just in time to meet the full impact of the Depression. The Labour Party in

Britain had certainly not been lucky. It could hardly have taken office at a more unfortunate moment. MacDonald struggled with the Depression for a time, but in 1931 he was forced to join with the Conservatives and some of the Liberals to form a 'National Government' specially to deal with the situation. National Governments of one sort or other were to guide Britain through the next critical years. Baldwin succeeded MacDonald as Premier in 1935, and Neville Chamberlain succeeded Baldwin in 1937.

These years certainly did not represent one of England's most glorious periods. We think of them now as the 'appeasement' years. The British people saw well enough the signs of war multiplying, but they so hated the idea of war that they succeeded in convincing themselves that war in the civilised world simply could not happen again. Never were they more pacifist. Their very sense of fairness played them false. They understood the extreme economic difficulties of the 'have-not' countries, and they made excuses for those countries. It is curious now to read in English newspapers the excuses that were then made, for instance, for Japan's aggression in China. Had not the British done much the same themselves in times past in India and Africa?

Thus, at first, many British people made similar excuses for Germany. They came to believe that the Treaty of Versailles was 'unfair'. They thought it unfair that Germany was allowed only a small army and navy, that she was not allowed to fortify the Rhineland, which, after all, was her own territory, that the Austrians were not allowed to be joined to her if they so wished, that the Germans in Czechoslovakia were not allowed to be joined to her if they,

too, so wished, and so forth. From one point of view, perhaps, these things were all unfair. Germany in those days had real and serious grievances, which a proud nation must soon have found too intolerable to bear. But the British people were not to realise, till it was too late, that Hitler, the Nazi Führer, would not hesitate to take advantage of these unfairnesses and



NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN, British Prime Minister, 1937-1940.

of the sympathy he was able to excite abroad in order to further quite other and far more dangerous ambitions of his own. They were not to realise, till it was too late, that Nazism knew nothing of fairness, that Hitler interpreted appeasement as weakness and increased his demands with each demand that was satisfied. In such a process there was neither justice nor peace.

So the British Government 'appeased' Hitler, hoping to remove the tensions in Europe by removing what seemed to be manifest grievances on his part. Hitler's conscription was therefore allowed to pass; a special Anglo-German Naval Agreement was concluded permitting him to increase his navy; his march into the Rhineland was passed; his march into Austria was passed. The British Government appeased Hitler again and again right up to the Munich Agreement, all to no avail in the end.

Meanwhile only slowly did Britain re-arm herself. British Budgets began to show bigger and bigger expenditure on armaments from 1935 onwards. Conscription was not introduced into Britain till the summer of



1939—just before the actual outbreak of the Second World War.

#### FRANCE IN THE CRISIS

France's reaction to the crisis at first was very different from Britain's. She met the menace of Hitler's Germany not by appeasement but by trying to extend and strengthen the old alliance system she had built up across Europe after the First World War. In 1934 she had a vigorous Foreign Minister, by name Barthou, and it was Barthou's idea that all the nations of Europe must combine together in a single Grand Alliance directed against Germany.

To this end, during 1934 Barthou made a tour of the European capitals. He visited Warsaw, Prague, Bucharest and Belgrade, and everywhere tried to find supporters for his cause. In September, 1934, largely through his influence, Soviet Russia joined the League of Nations, and this country, which so many people had once feared and detested, was now welcomed as a valuable friend and a preserver of the peace. Soviet Russia, again largely through Barthou's influence, agreed to a Mutual Assistance Pact with France, and the pact, after some delays, was signed in Paris in May, 1935. A similar pact was signed very shortly afterwards between Russia and Czechoslovakia.

It is hard to say whether Barthou would ever have succeeded in organising Europe as a great Peace Front which even Germany would have feared to attack, for in October, 1934, when he was at Marseilles to welcome King Alexander of Yugoslavia on a state visit to France, both he and the King were struck down and killed by the bullets of an assassin. Some people afterwards said that Germany

was indirectly responsible for the crime. Some said Italy was responsible. The full story has never yet been told.

Barthou's successor as French Foreign Minister was that curious man, Pierre Laval, the man who in later years was the leader of Vichy France and the collaborator of Germany. But at the time of



PIERRE LAVAL, several times French Premier and Foreign Minister.

which we are now writing Laval considered his great task was to become friends with Fascist Italy. Perhaps he thought he could persuade Mussolini to join the Peace Front whose foundations Barthou had begun to lay. In January, 1935, Laval did in fact come to an agreement with Mussolini, and several long-standing points of difference between France and Italy were smoothed out. But Laval was an accomplished intriguer, and there was some underhand business in the agreement, as was soon to be made plain.

Barthou might plan, and Laval might scheme, but alliances are of little value if the country that makes them is disunited and uncertain of itself. France in these days was showing weaknesses at home which were causing great concern to her friends. Really she had never recovered from the exhaustion of the First World War, and she was now showing that exhaustion in all sorts of domestic unrest. Unlike many other countries, France never had a

serious unemployment problem, but she had almost every other problem it was then possible for a nation to have—financial, labour, social and political.

The value of the French franc was a constant anxiety, and there were from time to time several financial scandals which were not helpful to France's credit abroad. French labour was almost going through 'a second revolution'. Communism was strong, and latterly the workers had taken to holding 'sit-down' strikes. During the summer of 1935 as many as a million workers were on strike, and most of them were 'in occupation' in their factories. After 1936 France had a Socialist government—the Popular Front as it was called—which at any other time might have brought in reforms of the greatest benefit to the country. But while French labour was discussing such things as a forty-hour week and holidays with pay, German labour across the frontier was working night and day forging tanks and aeroplanes at three and four times the French output.

Even worse than all this, perhaps, was the underground influence of Fascism and Nazism. There were in France in these years several groups and bands, or Leagues as they were called, of young men who behaved like Fascist troopers. The most famous of them was the Croix de Feu, originally an ex-servicemen's association whose members had all been decorated for bravery in the First World War, but which afterwards became fiercely political and anti-democratic. These Leagues paraded the streets in Fascist style, wore uniforms or special caps and badges, carried arms, held noisy meetings, incited riots, defied the law. French newspapers and newspapermen were often bought outright by foreign interests in support of the Leagues and were

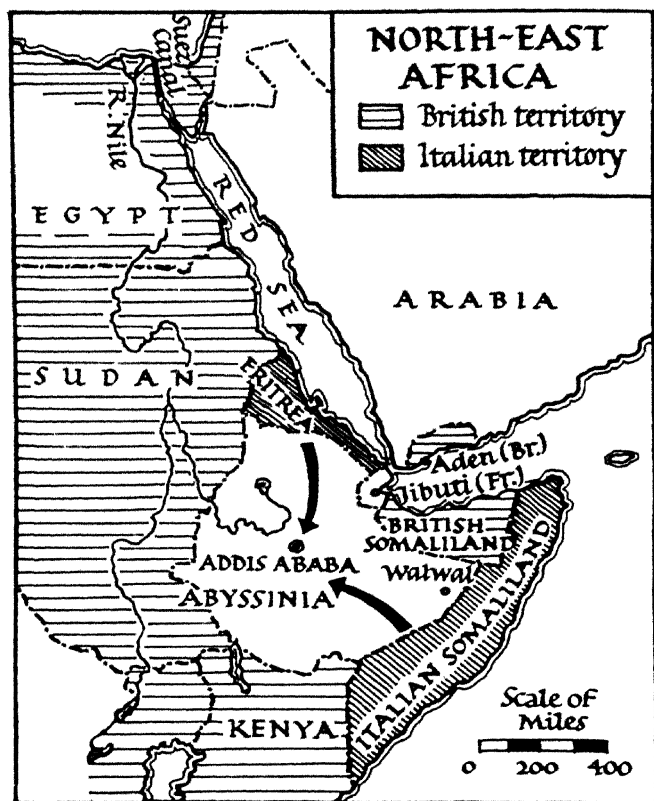
treacherously used to stir up discontent. Many said that French democracy was all but dead. All in all, France was in no condition to stand up to Hitler and Mussolini and their crises.

#### THE ABYSSINIAN CRISIS

At the end of 1934 Mussolini decided to join the band of the aggressors. He forced a crisis in the African Empire of Abyssinia, or Ethiopia. His arguments were very similar to the arguments the Japanese had used a few years before in Manchuria. Italy, he said, was a poor country with a large and growing population, and she needed to expand. She had suffered acutely from the Depression. She had a serious unemployment problem. She was deeply in debt. She must therefore win herself a rich colony overseas.

Abyssinia was the last of independent native states in Africa. It was misgoverned—so said Mussolini; it was inhabited by a savage people; it needed civilising; it was a ripe prize for commercial development; it had unexplored mines and forests and water-power; its uplands were suited for the settlement of white people. In short, said Mussolini, Abyssinia must become a province of the new Italian Empire he intended to found. It would be the cure for all Italy's economic troubles. Other Powers in the past, said Mussolini—England among them—had done worse things than he now contemplated doing.

But it was not Mussolini's arguments so much as his manner and methods which earned him enemies. From his balcony in Rome he would harangue his Fascist legions, praise the glories of war and boast of his coming African empire. And this sort of talk, especially from a man whose nation



The scene of Mussolini's aggression in Abyssinia, 1935-1936.

had never been distinguished for its fighting qualities, and spoken at a time when the world needed nothing so much as peace, was dangerous and contemptible. Furthermore, if Mussolini invaded Abyssinia, he would do so in defiance of the League of Nations, in defiance of the Pact of Paris, and in defiance of a treaty of friendship which he himself had recently signed with Abyssinia. Finally, he would destroy the last hopes of forming a Peace Front in Europe.

Mussolini chose the moment which best suited him for his Abyssinian Crisis. In December, 1934, some Abyssinian and Italian troops fired on one another at Walwal, a small, isolated watering-post in the desert on the borders of Italian Somaliland. It was an incident like the bomb outrage in Manchuria in 1931. It was of no importance in itself, but it was excuse enough for war, if war was wanted. Because Abyssinians had fired on Italians, the Emperor of Abyssinia must be punished and his realm taken away from him.

As in the Manchurian Crisis, the League of Nations tried to intervene. Britain tried to appease Italy, and proposed various 'solutions'. In September, 1935, in the Assembly of the League of Nations, Sir Samuel Hoare, the British Foreign Secretary, made a famous speech in which he declared that Britain would cling to the ideals of peace and law between nations. Hoare rallied great enthusiasm, and for a moment it seemed that the League would really make a strong stand against Mussolini.

But France showed no interest and offered the League no help. France was watching her old enemy, Germany, whom she feared, not Italy, whom she did not fear. Laval, the French Foreign Minister at this time, was far more

concerned with preserving intact his new friendship with Mussolini than with supporting the League. He had no wish to upset the agreement he had recently reached with Mussolini, and it is even believed that, as a part of that agreement, he had secretly promised Mussolini a free hand in Abyssinia.

After the war had actually started, and after Italian forces had invaded Abyssinia, the League of Nations made a last effort to restrain Italy by imposing 'sanctions' on her. Fifty nations, members of the League, cut trade relations with Italy, refused to send goods to her and refused to take goods from her. Afterwards Hoare and Laval tried to appease Mussolini with another 'solution'. The Hoare-Laval Plan, as it came to be called, proposed that Italy should be given large slices of Abyssinia, and in fact that the greater part of the country should become 'a zone of economic expansion and settlement' for her. There was widespread indignation in Britain and France when the details of the Plan became known—so contrary in sentiment to the fine-sounding speech which Hoare had so recently made in the League Assembly.

But neither sanctions nor solutions could hold Mussolini now. The only sanction which would have made him hesitate would have been a sanction on oil, but after the failure of the Hoare-Laval Plan no one had the inclination to support it. In October, 1935, Mussolini's invasion of Abyssinia had begun.

Mussolini massed 400,000 men with modern arms, transport and aircraft. Against them stood 300,000 native warriors of Haile Selassie, the Emperor of Abyssinia, who fought in primitive tribal formation and were armed with

little better than ancient matchlock rifles. But the main problem of Mussolini's generals in Abyssinia was not fighting the Emperor's warriors so much as building roads through the high mountainous country for all the tanks and armoured cars which the Italian army had brought with it. Italian engineers were far more important in the campaign than the Italian gunners. Even so, the Italians made very slow progress, and many think that they might never have succeeded without the use of poison gas, sprayed from aeroplanes—a terrible weapon against which the Abyssinians had no defence whatever.

On May 5, 1936, the Italian commander, Marshal Badoglio, at last captured the Abyssinian capital of Addis Ababa. The final Italian advance through the Abyssinian mountains was a grand promenade of the two longest armoured columns yet assembled in a modern war.

The Emperor Haile Selassie fled, and eventually found a home in England. Mussolini from his balcony in Rome announced the end of the war and the triumph of his armies. The King of Italy added 'Emperor of Abyssinia' to his many titles.



Typical Abyssinian warriors serving in the war against Italy.



THE MARCH INTO THE RHINELAND AND THE FORGING  
OF THE AXIS

Under the Treaty of Versailles Germany had agreed not to fortify or to keep armed forces in the Rhineland. The agreement had been re-affirmed when she signed the Locarno Pact in 1925. But Hitler judged well that the



German sentries on the Rhine after Hitler's march into the Rhineland in 1936.

nations of Europe were too busy watching events in Abyssinia and too discouraged by Italy's successes there, and he was not slow to take advantage of the situation. In March, 1936, on Hitler's orders, 50,000 men of the German army suddenly marched into the Rhineland. And it was not long before it was learned that Hitler intended to construct in his newly occupied

territory a great belt of fortifications facing France—the so-called West Wall, as it afterwards came to be known.

Hitler and Mussolini now had both scrapped treaties. Both were in a defiant, challenging mood. It was not surprising that they should now come together in some sort of private bargain. There were a number of grand state visits at this time between high-ranking Nazis and Fascists, all of which showed the way the wind was blowing. In November, 1936, in his speeches, Mussolini was openly talking about 'the Axis' between Berlin and Rome.

At the same time Japan drew closer to Germany. For anyone that had eyes to see, it was clear that Germany, Italy and Japan were gradually falling into line together. In November, 1936, in an attempt to offset the Mutual Assistance Pact which France and Russia had lately signed, Germany and Japan formed an Anti-Comintern Pact, directed against Russia. A year later the Anti-Comintern Pact was joined by Italy, and the Axis became thereby a formidable aggressive alliance, like a huge triangle, embracing the globe.

#### THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

Hardly had Europe had time to recover from the surprise and dismay of the Rhineland crisis, and hardly had the Abyssinian war ended, than a new war flared up in Spain.

Spain had always been a revolutionary country. In some ways she was modern and advanced, in others she still dated back to the Middle Ages, and the new and the old in her were always at odds with one another. Everything in Spain was harsh and violent, and her conflicts were therefore always the fiercer. The hot, glaring sunshine and the dry, rocky landscape, it used to be said, took all the gentleness out of the Spanish character. Life in Spain had colour and romance, but it could also be extraordinarily cruel and sordid.

The only government that ever lasted any length of time in such a country was some form of military dictatorship, but again and again the dictator was overthrown by revolution. Spain had known dictators long before Mussolini or Hitler had ever been heard of. In the years just after the First World War Alfonso XIII was King of

Spain, but the real ruler of the country, and its dictator, was General Primo de Rivera.

In 1930 Spain began to feel the effects of the Depression, and General Primo resigned. In 1931 King Alfonso fled the country. Once more Spain was in revolution, and for a few years she tried a sort of socialist Republic. In 1936 a combination of socialist parties, called the Popular Front, was elected, and in its hands, so it seemed, the new Republican Government would remain securely in power. Then, in July, 1936, a number of officers in the Spanish army revolted against the Republic, and general civil war broke out.

The officers wanted a return to a dictatorship, and they chose for dictator one of themselves—General Franco. Probably if there had been no interference from abroad the Republican Government would have crushed the revolt. General Franco had most of the army and the monarchists behind him, but the Republicans had the support of the big industrial cities like Madrid and Barcelona, where the real strength of the country lay.

Unhappily, foreign Powers began to interfere in the Spanish Civil War. Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany sent aid to General Franco, and Soviet Russia sent aid to the Republicans. Spain soon became a sort of testing-ground where the bigger European rivalries clashed, and the Spanish Civil War might soon have grown into another World War.

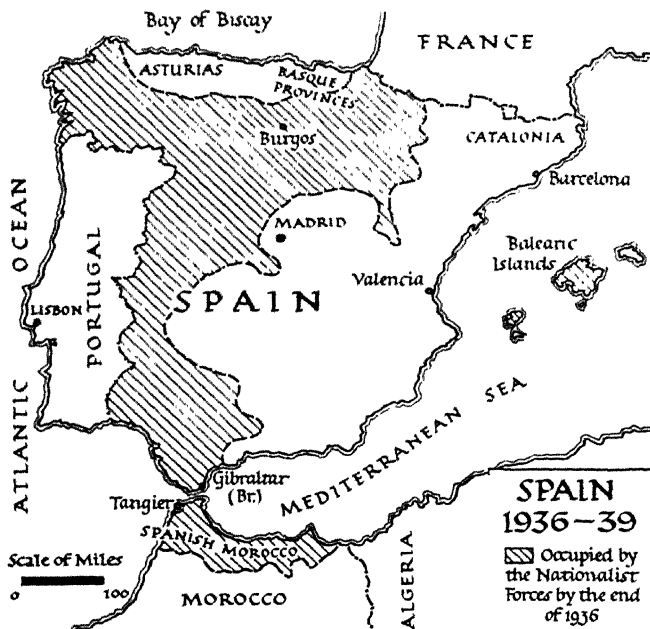
Britain was very divided in her sympathies. The Conservatives in England tended to sympathise with Franco, and Labour with the Republicans. But it was the view of the British Government that, whatever happened,

Britain should not interfere in Spain, and, largely through British influence, a Non-Intervention Committee was set up in London whose duty it was to watch the war and see that no foreign aid was sent to either side. France at this time had her own Popular Front Government, which should have sympathised with the Republicans in Spain, but nevertheless she also agreed to support the Non-Intervention Committee.

In spite of the Non-Intervention Committee, Mussolini and Hitler continued to send aid to Franco, and, to a much lesser extent, Soviet Russia continued to send aid to the Republicans. German pilots in German aeroplanes raided Madrid and Barcelona; Italian 'volunteers' under Italian officers fought regular battles with the Republican army, and their successes were acclaimed as victories in the newspapers in Italy. The main result was that Franco fought with all the reinforcements and war material he needed, and the Republicans were at a hopeless disadvantage.

The Republicans fought a losing battle, but they fought with great courage. The war lasted in all nearly three years, and is said to have cost the lives of a million men. In February, 1939, Franco's forces at last took Barcelona, and in March, 1939, they took Madrid. The last remnants of the Republican forces fled or surrendered. General Franco celebrated his triumph in a great parade in Madrid in which his 'allies' of the war, Italy and Germany, took part.

Franco was the new dictator of Spain, and the Government he set up was to all intents and purposes a Fascist government. If Spain was too exhausted by her war openly to join the Axis countries, she at least gave them her sympathy, and was regarded by them as a possible member.



In 1936 the Spanish Civil War broke out between the Spanish Nationalists, with Fascist and Nazi support, and the Spanish Republican Government, with Soviet Russian support.

#### THE LAST BREATHING-SPACE

In all the crowded events of this Period of Crisis which we are now describing there was one curious lull. For one year—the year 1937—Europe was free from crisis. The Spanish Civil War continued, but the danger of its spreading seemed to lessen. On the other side of the world, as we told in the previous chapter, 'the China Incident' began,

and China and Japan clashed in open war. But Hitler, in the speech he customarily made every 30th of January—the anniversary of his coming to power—announced that for 1937, as far as he was concerned, ‘the era of surprises has passed’. And so, for 1937, in Europe, it actually was.

But Hitler nevertheless used the year intensively continuing his preparations. His armament factories were getting into full production; his new armies were training. A last breathing-space was certainly very helpful to him. In November 1937, he and his generals had already made their plans for the conquest of Austria and Czechoslovakia.

## CHAPTER 17

### THE APPROACH OF WAR

#### THE AUSTRIAN CRISIS

ONE of the great dangers of Fascism and Nazism was the way in which they were able to find in other countries allies and sympathisers who were themselves citizens and nationals of those countries. Sometimes Fascism and Nazism went so far as to organise regular ‘fifth columns’ to foment strikes in those countries, to undermine law and order, and to corrupt the army and police. All the neighbours or near-neighbours of Italy and Germany—for example, Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Rumania, Belgium—sooner or later had local Fascist or Nazi parties

in them, though often under different names. In the preceding chapter we mentioned that there were Fascist Leagues in France.\* But even farther afield the influence might be felt. Nazism was strong in South America, and there was a Nazi Bund in the United States. In England we had a sort of Fascist Party for a while, though it never grew to be of any importance.

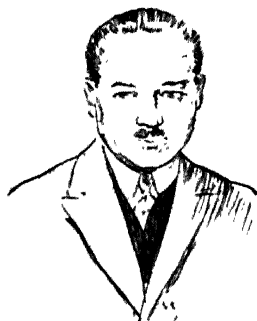
At this time the little country of Austria, lying between Italy and Germany, had both Fascist and Nazi parties. We might imagine that there was little to choose between them. But the political situation in Austria was unusually complicated. The Austrian Fascists, or *Heimwehr* (Home Defence) Party, as they were called locally, stood for the independence of Austria; they were prone to be pro-Italian and to look to Mussolini for support, and they were usually strongly Catholic. The Austrian Nazis stood for the *Anschluss*, or union with Germany, and consequently they were pro-German and looked to Hitler for support. Each of these parties had its own bodies of troopers, who were often fighting one another. The country was poor, and offered an easy prey to stronger interfering neighbours. Austria was almost like another Spain where European Powers tested out their rivalries.

In 1933, when Hitler came to power in Germany, Dollfuss was Chancellor of Austria and was ruling almost dictatorially. Dollfuss' main political support was the *Heimwehr*. He was inclined to Fascism and was friendly to Mussolini. He was also a good Catholic. He waged a constant battle against the Austrian Nazis. In appearance he was a very small man—just four feet eleven inches in

\* Page 190.

height and cartoonists in the English newspapers pictured him as a little David fighting the Nazi Goliath.

In July, 1934, the Austrian Nazis plotted to assassinate Dollfuss and set up a Nazi government under a leader of their own. One morning a number of them, wearing police uniforms, drove up to Dollfuss' office in the Chancellery buildings in Vienna, and shot and mortally wounded him. It is reported that they afterwards laid him on a sofa, where he died after three hours of agony. Neither doctor nor priest was allowed to attend him.



ENGELBERT DOLLFUSS, Austrian Chancellor, 1934-1934. Assassinated by the Nazis.

The assassination of Dollfuss sent a shock of horror through Europe. As a plot it failed. The Nazis did not seize the government of Austria. Schuschnigg, an old colleague of Dollfuss, succeeded him as Chancellor. Great numbers of Austrian Nazis were arrested or escaped abroad. In July, 1936, Austria and Germany concluded a treaty of friendship with one another.

But it was far from Hitler's real purpose that any settlement with Austria should be lasting. He wanted Austria. It was his own homeland, and it was a pretty little morsel for conquest. But he wanted Austria in his own way and in his own good time. He waited quietly through his year of preparation, 1937, and then decided to strike. On February 12, 1938, he invited Schuschnigg to his mountain



chalet at Berchtesgaden in Bavaria, and there he raged and raved at the unfortunate man and threatened that, if Austria was not Nazified at once, German troops would invade the country.

A month later, on March 11, 1938, Schuschnigg resigned, and that very evening German troops invaded the country. The whole affair was very like the march into the Rhineland two years before. On March 13 Hitler himself drove into the Austrian capital, Vienna. Throughout his route the buildings of the city were decorated with Nazi swastikas, and the streets were crowded with his cheering supporters. Austria had been conquered for Nazism.

#### THE CZECHOSLOVAK CRISIS AND THE MUNICH PACT

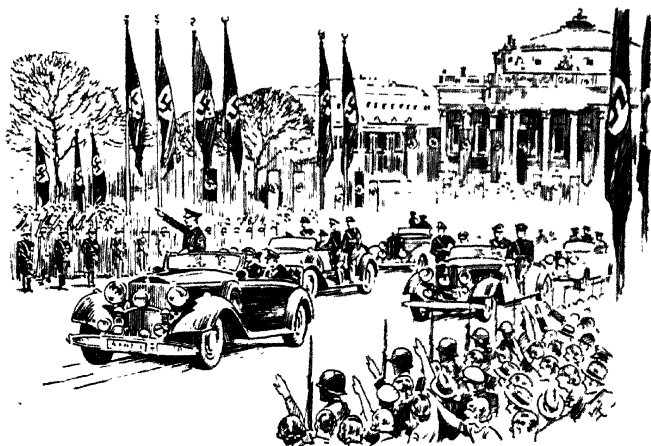
After Austria came the turn of Czechoslovakia. Here, too, as in Austria, there grew up a dangerous Nazi Party. Three million Germans—the so-called Sudeten Germans—whom we mentioned in an earlier chapter\*, lived in Czechoslovakia. Many of them had always wanted to be joined to Germany, and many of them became Nazis. The leader of the Czech Nazis was a quiet, young, ordinary looking bank-clerk and gymnastics instructor, Konrad Henlein.

The Czech Nazis had a very simple argument in their favour. It was the old argument of self-determination. If 3,000,000 Germans, living in what was then Czechoslovakia, really wanted to be joined to Germany, it was hard to deny them. But so often it was Hitler's way to take advantage of an apparent injustice to further very different designs of his own. As was soon to become clear, Hitler

\* Pages 59-60.

intended to seize Czechoslovakia much as he had just seized Austria.

The Czechs themselves had a simple argument in reply. They claimed that they could not lose 3,000,000 of their people, together with a territory which contained the country's richest industries and strongest fortifications,



HITLER ENTERS VIENNA

The first independent country to fall victim to Nazi aggression was Austria, seized by German forces in March 1938.

without destroying the very state of Czechoslovakia. The Czechs were a loyal, democratic people. They had been one of the most successful and promising of the new nations of Europe. Their case deserved to be judged on its merits.

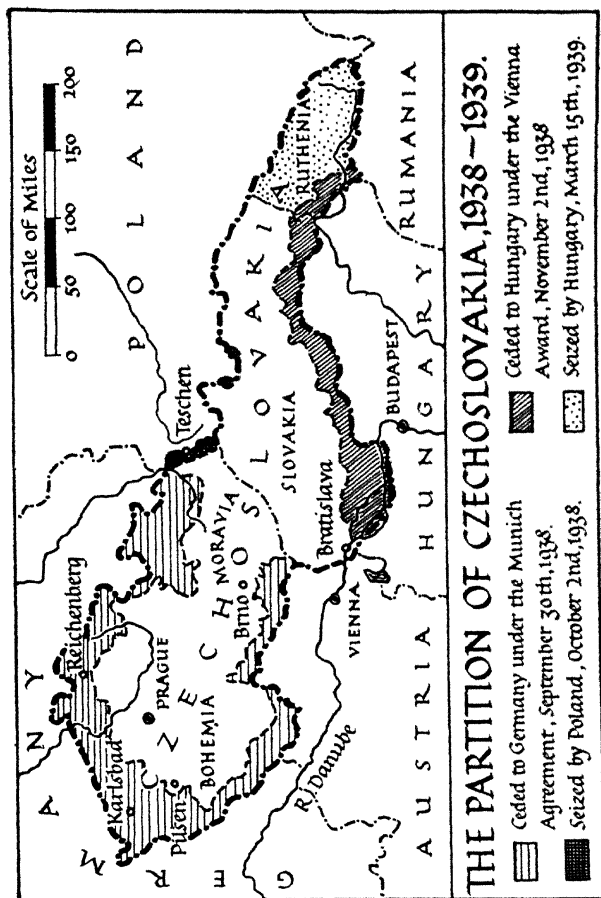
But by the late spring and summer of 1938 the German newspapers and radios were accusing the Czechs of all sorts of crimes and atrocities against the Sudeten Germans.

Konrad Henlein's Nazis in the Sudeten districts were parading the streets and insulting and attacking their opponents. It was painfully obvious that Czechoslovakia was being worked up for a regular Nazi crisis.

Neville Chamberlain was then Premier in Britain, trying out his policy of appeasement. During the summer of 1938 Chamberlain sent Lord Runciman to Czechoslovakia to see if any solution of the Sudeten problem could be found. Lord Runciman spent several weeks travelling about Czechoslovakia, meeting the leaders of the Czech parties, discussing all aspects of the Sudeten problem, but everything he proposed Henlein immediately rejected. On September 6, 1938, Hitler brought matters to a head by declaring, in a speech to a great rally of his Nazi supporters in Nuremberg, that he was determined to liberate the Sudetens even if it meant going to war with Czechoslovakia, and Hitler's threats seemed no idle ones.

Czechoslovakia had good friends. She was a member of the Little Entente, and France and Russia were her allies. It was hard to believe that Hitler would attack her if he were to bring all these nations against himself and to start a general European war into the bargain. But Czechoslovakia's treaties with France and Russia were so worded that Russia would not fight unless France fought first, and so great had been the pace of Germany's re-armament that France at the moment felt herself quite unable to accept Hitler's challenge.

Nor, indeed, was Britain any better prepared for war than France. London was without any proper air defence. The A.R.P. was just beginning to be organised and had no equipment whatever. One story has it that in September,



Under the Munich Agreement, Czechoslovakia ceded to Germany the 'Sudeten' areas largely inhabited by Germans. Under the Vienna Award, she ceded to Hungary certain areas in Slovakia, largely inhabited by Hungarians. Poland seized Teschen, and later Hungary seized Ruthenia.

1938, there were only four anti-aircraft guns in the entire London area. The German air force was said to be greater than those of Britain, France and Czechoslovakia combined.

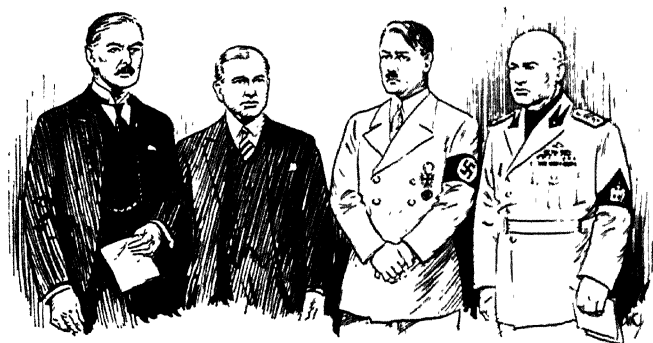
War, therefore, seemed perilously near in that September, 1938, when suddenly Chamberlain made the announcement that he was going to fly to Germany to meet Hitler personally in an eleventh-hour attempt to ward off the impending disaster. Between September 15 and 30 Chamberlain had three meetings with Hitler. The last of the three was the conference at Munich, attended also by the French Premier, Daladier, and by Mussolini. An agreement was reached at Munich, but at the cost of deep humiliation to France and Britain and of crippling losses to Czechoslovakia.

The Munich Agreement, in fact, was a virtual surrender to Hitler. Czechoslovakia was given just ten days to hand over the Sudeten territories to Germany. At the same time a slice of Czechoslovakia was ceded to Hungary. The Poles, on their own account, marched in and took the Czech city of Teschen, which was partly inhabited by Poles and which they had always claimed as their own.

Everywhere—that is, everywhere except in Czechoslovakia—there was unbounded joy and relief that the Munich Agreement had preserved the peace. And perhaps it would have been a real peace if the Nazis themselves had been in the mood for peace. But they treated Munich, not as a concession to justice, but as a triumph. It seemed to prove to them that their policy of force and threats had succeeded. Their appetites were whetted for more. In the November after Munich there were outbreaks of riots

all over Germany against the Jews. Synagogues were burnt down; Jewish shops were sacked; hundreds of Jews were turned out of their homes and publicly insulted in the streets. Certainly there was nothing to show that Munich had resulted in any change of heart in Germany.

The second act in the Czech drama was soon played. In March, 1939, the Germans suddenly marched into that



THE MUNICH AGREEMENT

By the Agreement the 'Sudeten' areas of Czechoslovakia were ceded to Germany. It was signed on September 30, 1938, by Neville Chamberlain for Britain, Daladier for France, Hitler for Germany, and Mussolini for Italy.

which was left of Czechoslovakia. The brave little country, of which, in 1919, so much had been hoped, disappeared from the map of Europe.

#### RUSSIA IN THE CRISIS

We used to hear a great deal at one time of Hitler's 'blue-prints' for conquest. We know now that his plans for the seizure of Austria and Czechoslovakia were ready



in November 1937, and his plan for the seizure of Poland was ready in April 1939. Since 1936 he had occupied and fortified the Rhineland, and he had thereby made it infinitely more difficult for a French army to attack Germany in support of France's allies in central or eastern Europe.

Nazi agents and 'tourists', meanwhile, were making their way in greater and greater numbers into the Balkans, evidently preparing for the eventual Nazi seizure of those lands also. All these plans were following a general eastwards direction, and, in so far as they could be guessed, they were naturally causing great concern in Soviet Russia.

The question which everyone in 1938 and 1939 was asking was, What will Russia do? Our English newspapers at this time talked of 'the Russian Enigma' and tried to forecast what resistance to Hitler Russia might put up or what terms with him she might be induced to make.

From all accounts Hitler detested Communism and all its works. In *Mein Kampf* he had spoken of the Bolsheviks as "common bloodstained criminals, the scum of humanity, which has exercised the most frightful régime of tyranny of all time," and he seemed to mean what he said. Hitler had often hinted that he coveted the rich wheatfields of the Ukraine and the rich mines of the Urals. Then, since 1934, Russia had become the friend of the Western democracies; she had been recognised by the United States; she had joined the League of Nations; she had signed mutual-assistance pacts with France and Czechoslovakia. All these signs pointed to the strong probability that Russia would align herself against Germany and with the Western democracies.

But there were also signs that high officers in the German army and in the Red Army were on very friendly terms, and, as we know, German armaments, forbidden by Versailles, had occasionally been manufactured in Russian factories. Some of these high officers in the Red Army apparently be-



came a little too friendly, for in 1937 Marshal Tukhachevsky and seven Red Army generals were tried before a military court in Moscow for 'conspiracy with a foreign Power' and were shot within twenty-four hours of receiving sentence. This trial of the generals was one of several extraordinary trials which were being held in Russia at this time, much to the amazement and bewilderment of the rest of the world. In fact, no one quite knew what was happening in Russia, how strong she really was, or which side she would finally join.

We do not yet know the whole story. But probably the Munich Agreement decided Russia. Russia had not been invited to the famous conference. Hitler had determined that she should not be invited. Thus Russia had been left out in the cold while Germany, Italy, France and Britain had decided among themselves what was to be done with her ally and near neighbour, Czechoslovakia. Russia was not only deeply insulted at this rough treatment, but she formed the strong conviction that the Western democracies, France and Britain, were purposely patching up a peace with Hitler in order to turn him eastwards against herself. We shall see all too soon how Russia showed her deep anger and suspicion.

#### THE POLISH CRISIS

The last of the crises, which led directly to the outbreak of the Second World War, was over Poland. Austria and Czechoslovakia had gone, and it was now to be the turn of Poland. Once again Hitler made use of an apparent injustice to further much more sinister and far-reaching designs. He used the old German grievance over the

Polish Corridor and the Free City of Danzig. Hitler was determined that he would have the Polish Corridor and Danzig. He would take them exactly as he had taken the Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia, and in taking them he would destroy Poland exactly as he had destroyed Czechoslovakia. During the summer of 1939 the German radios and newspapers began to accuse the Poles of all sorts of crimes and atrocities against Germans living in Poland. In 1938 German radios and newspapers had prepared the Czechoslovak crisis in just the same way.

At this late hour in Hitler's conquering career the Governments of Britain and France resolved to call a halt. There must be no more Munichs. One by one the smaller nations of Europe were falling. Barthou in 1934 was right. Only a Grand Alliance against Germany would stop her from playing havoc with all the world. On March 31, 1939, Britain and France gave a guarantee to Poland to the effect that, if Poland was attacked and decided to resist, they would give her all the support in their power. If Hitler forced his issues with Poland, therefore, he would find himself at war with themselves. Britain and France then invited Russia to join their combination.

But Russia was still in an angry and suspicious mood, and still convinced that Britain and France were seeking to embroil her in a quarrel with Germany. As Stalin himself said, he did not intend to pick Britain's and France's chestnuts out of the fire. If war there was to be, Russia was determined to stay out of it. On August 23, 1939, Germany and Russia astonished the world by signing a Non-Aggression Pact and agreeing 'to refrain from any act of force against each other'. Germany was free from the menace

of a Russian war. Once more the Grand Alliance had failed to come into being.

Early in the morning of September 1, 1939, without declaration of war, German troops with aeroplanes crossed the Polish border. Hitler had launched another of his invasions. Two days later, faithful to their guarantee to Poland, Britain and France were at war with Germany. The Second World War had begun.

## PART THREE

### THE SECOND WORLD WAR, 1939-1945

#### CHAPTER 18

##### THE FIRST PART OF THE WAR, 1939-1941

###### THE GERMAN BLITZKRIEG AGAINST POLAND






GERMANY began the First World War in 1914 with a plan. She also began the Second World War with a plan, the Blitzkrieg or 'Lightning War'. Ever since the end of the First World War her military experts had been carefully considering some means whereby, in any future war, the old deadlock of the trenches of 1914-1918 could be overcome. True, the Treaty of Versailles had reduced the German army in numbers and forbidden it the use of tanks, planes and heavy guns—though, as we know, these terms were never kept. But at least the Treaty of Versailles did not prevent the German generals from planning and thinking, thinking and planning, so that, when Hitler in 1934 began to expand the German army and once more to build up a huge German war machine, he found ready for him a complete blue-print of the kind of army it was to be, the kind of arms that it would use and the kind of war that it would fight.

On September 1, 1939, the German plan went into action against Poland. First, droves of German planes flew over,

and in a few hours the Polish airfields were bombed and made unserviceable. Hundreds of Polish planes were destroyed on the ground before they had time to rise. Then followed more droves of German planes, dive-bombing the Polish infantry positions. Behind them came the German



### POLAND, SEPTEMBER 1939.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
|  Territory assigned to Germany.  |  Polish frontiers 1920-1939 |
|  Territory assigned to U.S.S.R.  |  The Curzon Line.           |
|  Territory assigned to Lithuania |  |

In September 1939, in accordance with their Non-Aggression Pact, Germany and Soviet Russia partitioned Poland between themselves, and once more Poland disappeared from the map of Europe.

tanks, and against them the Polish infantry, already unnerved and dazed by dive-bombing, offered no serious resistance. The German tanks raced ahead into the heart of the Polish countryside, cutting the roads and railways, playing havoc with the streams of refugees who were now trying to escape from the areas near the battle-fronts. Parachutists and a 'fifth column', long carefully prepared, added to the terror and disorder. In three weeks Poland was defeated, her army scattered and routed, her Government and leading citizens in flight. The Polish capital, Warsaw, held out another week under merciless bombing.

Then suddenly Russia moved. On September 17, 1939, in accordance with a secret agreement under the recent German-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact, Russian troops invaded Poland from the east and proceeded to partition the unhappy country with Germany. It was the unkindest cut of all. Poland once more disappeared from the map of Europe. But it is interesting to notice that the new frontier across Poland between Germany and Russia fitted very closely to the Curzon Line, once suggested as Poland's proper frontier\*. Germany organised her slice of Poland as a 'General Government' and subjected the Polish people in it to the most horrible persecution.

'THE PHONEY WAR' AND THE GERMAN BLITZKRIEG AGAINST  
THE WEST

The Second World War falls into three phases. As in the First World War, we can speak of a First Part, a Middle Part and a Final Part. The First Part opened with Germany's attack on Poland, and brought in the Western

\* Pages 63-64.

European Powers. During its Middle Part the war spread to Russia, Japan and the United States of America and covered nearly all the world; the conflict between the Axis Powers and the United Nations was in full development. During these two phases, about three years in all—from 1939 to 1942—Germany and her Axis friends were a winning side. During the third and Final Part, a period of about another three years—from 1942 to 1945—the United Nations began to gain the upper hand, and at last brought the war to a victorious end.

The three chapters into which we have divided this part of the book correspond to these three phases. It all makes an extraordinarily complicated story. We have not merely two main theatres of fighting—a Western Front and an Eastern Front—as we had in the First World War. We have fronts in Poland, Finland, Norway, France, the Mediterranean and Balkan countries, Russia and the Far East—to say nothing of the war at sea; we have the Battle of France, the Battle of Britain, Pearl Harbour, Singapore, Stalingrad, the invasions of Europe and Japan; we have fighting in remote parts of the world and under conditions which at the time of the First World War would have been thought impossible—in the African desert, the Burmese and Malayan jungles, and the Russian steppes in the depths of the Russian winter. Something of this complicated, far-flung, world-wide war we must now describe.

Britain and France had at once honoured their pledge to Poland, and they declared war on Germany on September 3, 1939. Italy, though a member of the Axis and an ally of Germany, decided to act as she had done in 1914, and she remained neutral.

But after the opening shock of Germany's Blitzkrieg against Poland the war unexpectedly stood still. No large-scale fighting yet started between Germany and Britain and France in the West. Here two long lines of fortifications faced one another—the French Maginot Line and the German West Wall—and it seemed as if the old type of immobile deadlocked war might well develop again between them. No wholesale air raids were attempted by either side, and the mass destruction by aerial bombing, which everyone had once predicted, for the time being did not take place. The British navy, as in 1914, began to blockade Germany, and German ships were gradually driven off the seas. The German 'pocket-battleship' *Graf Spee* was skilfully outfought in an action against three British cruisers off the River Plate in December, 1939, and was afterwards scuttled by her own crew. But, all in all, during the winter of 1939-1940 the war went through a strange, uneasy lull. At the time the American newspapers called it 'the phoney war'.

Russia alone was busy in these winter months. She had just occupied a part of defeated Poland, and she now occupied the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. These states had all been part of Russia in 1914, and had gained their independence after the First World War. Russia was clearly taking advantage of the larger war in Europe to recover territories she believed she had then unfairly lost. But she was also trying to improve and strengthen her frontiers, in evident preparation for a German attack which she was sure would one day be made upon her. As we shall see, she had good reason for her fears.

Then Russia started a small war on her own account with



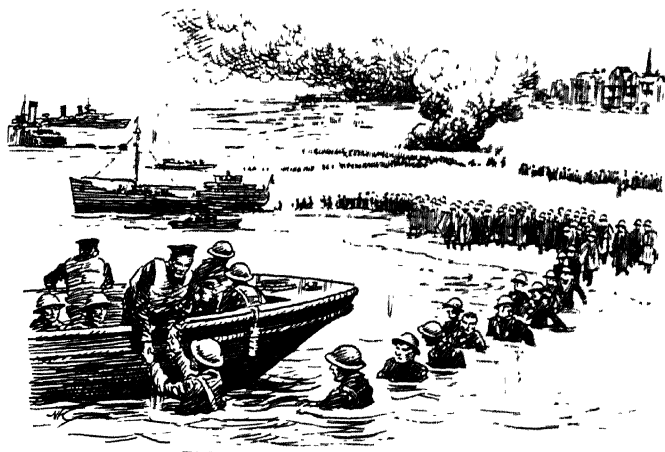
Finland. Finland, too, had been part of Russia in 1914, and Finland, too, was now to be part of Russia's improved and strengthened frontiers. Unlike her Baltic neighbours, Finland resisted Russia's occupation and put up a spirited defence. Britain and France, indignant at Russia's high-handed action against the little country, prepared to send help to Finland, and were within an ace of declaring war on Russia herself. The League of Nations expelled Russia from membership. Finland and Russia eventually made peace in March, 1940, and Finland ceded Russia one or two strips of territory.

The phoney war was not to last for long. Fighting in the West flared up suddenly in the spring of 1940. On April 9 Germany launched her Blitzkrieg against Denmark and Norway, and on May 10 against Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg.

On May 15, 1940, the combination of dive-bomber, tank, parachutist and fifth-column fell with full force upon France. German tank divisions pierced a sector of the French frontier near Sedan where the fortifications of the the Maginot Line were unfinished and where, because of the difficult wooded country, it had been thought that tanks could not operate, and in a few days drove deep into Flanders and northern France. The British Expeditionary Force, which had been sent to France, retired to Dunkirk—the last port on the coast which by then had not been overrun by German tanks—there to be evacuated to England by hundreds of every type of sea-going craft that could be sailed across the Channel.

It was a fearful disaster. The greater part of the British Expeditionary Force, together with some scattered French

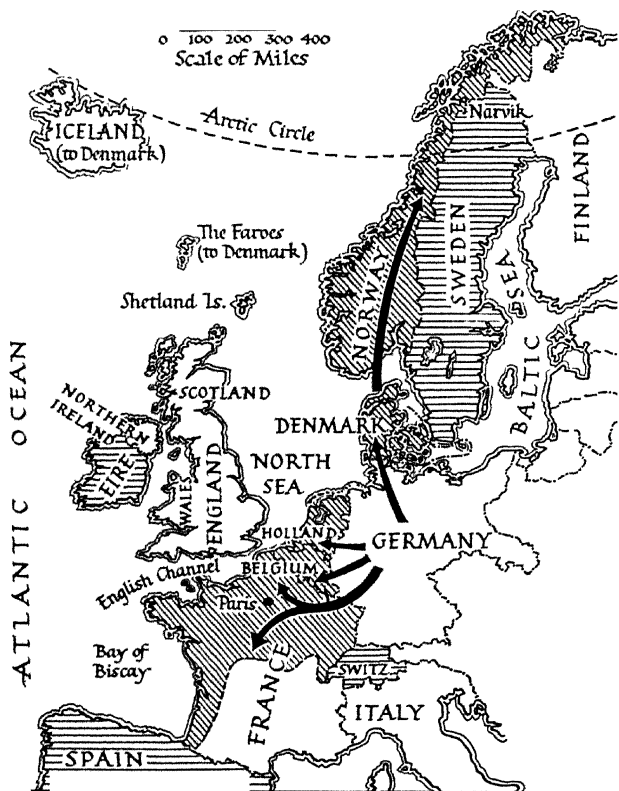
and Belgian troops, 325,000 men in all, had been miraculously rescued at Dunkirk, but valuable equipment had been left behind. The main French army, badly shaken and reduced in strength, took up new defensive positions along the River Somme and River Aisne. General Weygand,



DUNKIRK

The German break-through in France in May 1940 cut off the northern French Armies and the British Expeditionary Force, and pressed them back to the Channel. Eventually 325,000 men were evacuated from Dunkirk by destroyers and small ships of every kind.

who had been Marshal Foch's Chief of Staff in the First World War, was given supreme command. On June 5 the Germans resumed their attacks. Weygand in a special order announced that 'the Battle of France' had begun. Once more the days followed one another with news of fresh disasters. Everywhere the German Blitzkrieg triumphed.



### GERMANY'S BLITZKRIEG IN THE WEST, 1940.

Territories occupied  
by Germany.

Countries remaining  
neutral.

By her Blitzkrieg in 1940 Germany succeeded in occupying the whole coast of Europe from the Bay of Biscay to the northern limits of Norway, thus closely 'investing' the seas round the British Isles.

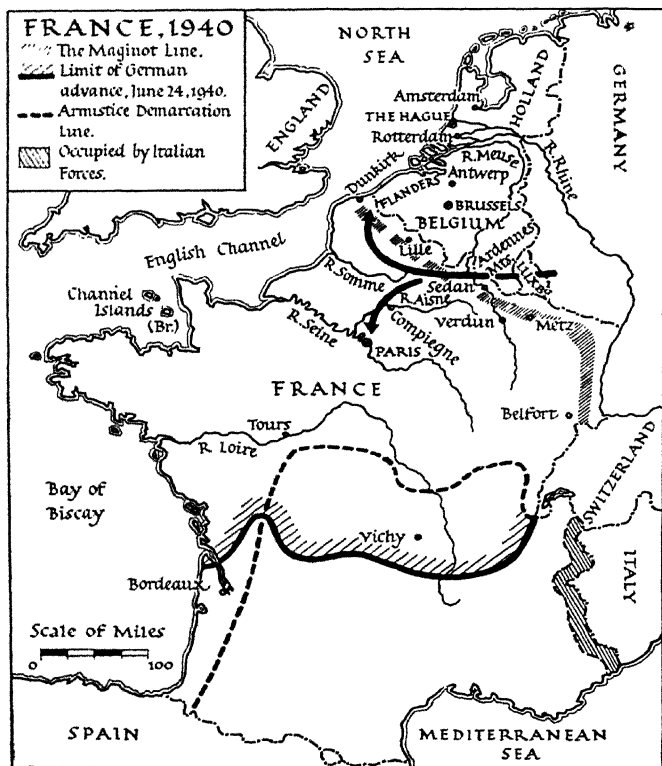
On June 10 Mussolini decided he must hurry into the fight before it was all over, and he suddenly declared war upon a France who was already defeated. It was a cowardly, treacherous action. A small Italian force advanced a few miles into French Alpine territory.

Marshal Pétain formed a new government in France with the assistance of Pierre Laval, and he at once sued Germany for an armistice. On June 22, 1940, at Compiègne, in the same railway coach in which Marshal Foch had signed the armistice of 1918, France accepted Nazi Germany's terms.

In just two months of fighting Germany had overrun Denmark, Norway, Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg and a large part of France. Under the terms of the armistice with France she occupied two-thirds of France, including the main French industrial areas and all the Atlantic coastline. The French army was disbanded; thousands of French prisoners of war were sent to labour in Germany. A French government under Pétain and Laval, in semi-collaboration with Germany, was set up in unoccupied France at the town of Vichy. A British naval squadron was forced to bombard and sink several of the big French warships laying off the Algerian coast to prevent their falling into German hands.

#### THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN

Britain now stood alone, and an all-conquering Germany faced her across the North Sea and Channel. Even the Channel Islands had been abandoned to the enemy. But it was not all loss. Britain was still strong at sea, and the sea was her native element. The Commonwealth was with her,



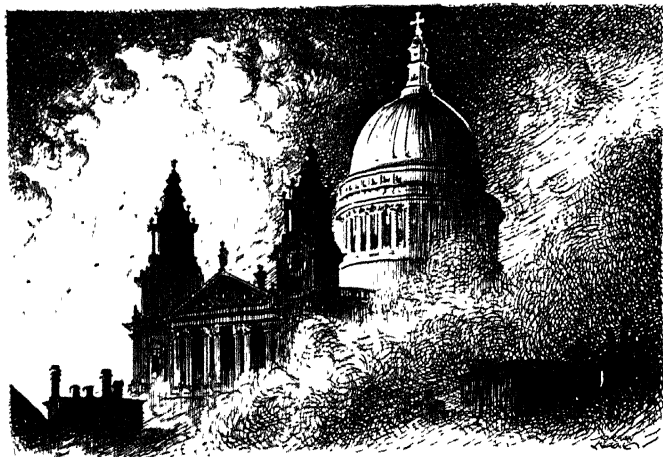
Under the armistice of June 1940 Germany occupied the whole of northern France and the French Atlantic coast. A French Government, in collaboration with Germany, was set up in Unoccupied France at the town of Vichy.

sending aid and preparing to send more. A sympathetic America was being roused into action. Churchill had succeeded Neville Chamberlain as Premier, had formed a united all-party government, and had begun to make his

inspiring war-time speeches. In England the A.R.P. was trained and ready; the Home Guard was being built up. The Free French Forces under General de Gaulle and the exiled Governments of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Norway and Holland were on British soil organising what was left of their men and resources for the common struggle. It was a resolute, confident and not altogether friendless Britain which met the attempted German invasion of September 1940.

Hitler had issued his order for the invasion, 'Operation Sea-Lion', on July 16. But it was some weeks before German preparations for crossing the Channel and for making landings on the English coast could be put in hand. Perhaps Hitler was over-sure at first that bombing alone would conquer England for him. Eventually a fleet of landing-craft was assembled during August in the harbours and estuaries of northern France. Hitler set the invasion date for September 15.

Meanwhile the invasion could never have taken place till the German *Luftwaffe* had established command of the air over the Channel. But Royal Air Force Fighter Command, however inferior in numbers, was more than a match for the enemy. By means of radar, then a new invention, German bombers could be 'sighted' fifty, and often a hundred, miles away, and interception could be concentrated at precise points before they reached their targets. The Battle of Britain was a truly Elizabethan victory. A few hundreds of young British and Dominion fighter pilots, most of them not yet twenty years of age, and a few score of young Poles, Czechs, French and Belgians fought and repulsed Germany's aerial armada. "Never in the field of human conflict,"



THE BLITZ ON LONDON

During the Battle of Britain London was subjected to two months' intensive attack by German bombers.

said Churchill, "was so much owed by so many to so few."

The German attacks began on August 8, and lasted till the end of October. The attacks were made at first by daylight on the Channel ports and shipping, then on the R.A.F. aerodromes and aircraft factories, and finally by night on London and the London Docks. No such battle had ever been fought before. It was fought, as the Air Ministry's account described it, "three, four, five, and sometimes more than six miles above the surface of the earth by some hundreds of aircraft flying at speeds often in excess of 300 miles an hour". By November the battle had died away. German interest switched to Midland arms

towns, such as Coventry, which was 'terror raided' on the night of November 14 by 500 German bombers.

If R.A.F. Fighter Command had been defeated in 1940 Britain must have been overrun, even as France was overrun. A hostile, triumphant Germany would have possessed the whole of Atlantic Europe and as much of the Mediterranean as she desired. Neutrality would not have protected the United States and the United States would have found herself having to meet the Nazi menace, not in battle-grounds of her own choosing, as she eventually did in 1943, but in Brazil, Mexico and even in Lower Canada. Hitler would have attacked Russia at his leisure, and Russia would have fought him without the immense material aid from the United States and Britain which did, in fact, count so heavily in her magnificent resistance. Turkey, Egypt and the Near East would have fallen an easy prey, and Japan would unquestionably have seized Australasia and India. The Battle of Britain was one of the great deliverances of history.

#### THE MEDITERRANEAN AND THE BALKANS

The Battle of Britain is all the more remarkable when we remember that Britain in 1940 had to divert a part of her precious, inadequate resources to quite another theatre. It has always been the task of Britain in all the great wars in which she has taken part to have to fight in several parts of the world at once. Britain is an island with immense trading interests and scattered possessions and outposts overseas, and all these from time to time have become tempting objects of attack to her enemies.

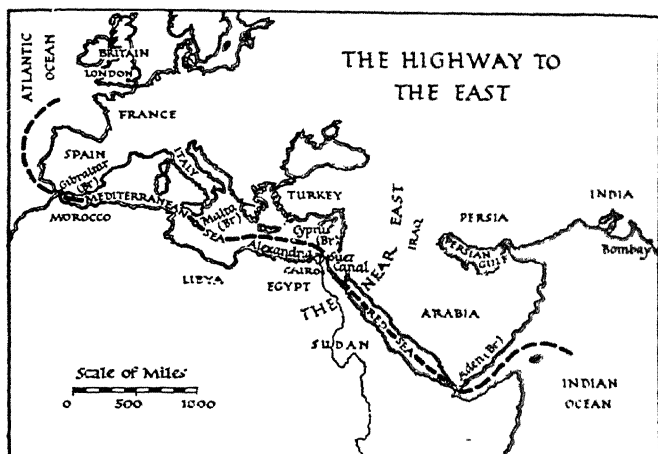
In the Second World War one area in particular became a



theatre of war, and that area was the Mediterranean and Near East. Through the Mediterranean Sea normally passed great numbers of British merchant ships. In Egypt and Palestine and in the Arab countries of the Near East lay important British interests and responsibilities. Without the 'strategic arc' of Gibraltar, Malta, Suez and Aden the British Empire in India and the East could not have existed. And now, in June, 1940, France had fallen, Italy with her possessions in Libya and Abyssinia had entered the war on the side of Germany, and Spain under General Franco was likely to be hostile. The Mediterranean was gravely imperilled.

In 1940, therefore, while Britain was fighting a battle of life and death against the German bombers over her own homeland, her armies were also defending the Near East. British planes were raiding Italian naval bases in Italy, and British warships were prowling the Mediterranean hunting down the elusive Italian navy. Reinforcements were arriving in Egypt from Australia, New Zealand and India. South Africans were in Kenya. The combined British armies in the Near East were put under the command of General Wavell.

In October, 1940, Mussolini attacked Greece, and some British forces were sent to help the Greeks defend their country. Then suddenly, with complete surprise, on December 9, 1940, General Wavell's army from Egypt invaded Italian Libya and, in a two months' swiftly moving campaign of great skill and perfect co-ordination between all arms, routed a much larger Italian army and took 133,000 prisoners, all at a cost to itself of 438 men killed. In February, 1941, a force, largely of Indian and South



The Highway to the East passes through the Mediterranean and Red Seas via the British bases of Gibraltar, Malta, Suez and Aden. The map illustrates the strategic importance of the Near East.

African troops, fought its way into Abyssinia. The Abyssinian Emperor Haile Selassie returned from exile and was restored to the throne the Italians had taken from him in 1935.

The war was clearly going very badly for Italy. Even in his war against the Greeks, Mussolini had made no progress. Hitler felt bound to go to the help of his ally and clean up the whole Mediterranean situation. In October, 1940, German troops had already begun to enter Rumania and had there helped to engineer a Nazi revolution favourable to themselves. Between January and February, 1941, Bulgaria was induced to throw in her lot with Germany. In March an entirely new German force—the Africa Corps—especially trained for desert warfare, appeared in

Libya and, in a short, sharp offensive, drove Wavell's army out of all the gains it had just made there. In April Germany's Blitzkrieg was launched against Yugoslavia and Greece.

Germany overran all the Balkans, and her Africa Corps dangerously threatened Egypt. A pro-Axis revolt broke out in Iraq, and was suppressed only with extreme difficulty. French Vichy forces for a moment dominated Syria. It looked in the early days of 1941 as if the whole of British power in the Mediterranean and Near East would irretrievably collapse.

Then, suddenly, Hitler threw away all these advantages he had won and turned to the invasion of Russia.

## CHAPTER 19

### THE MIDDLE PART OF THE WAR, 1941-1942

#### GERMANY INVADES RUSSIA

**W**HY Germany invaded Russia in 1941 is a question which will always be discussed. From 1938, when she first seized Austria, up to the midsummer of 1941, Germany had come to possess or control all Western Europe and the Mediterranean. The wealth of some fifteen countries and the labour of populations totalling 150,000,000 had been pressed into her service. She dominated helpful 'neutrals' like Spain, Sweden and Turkey and her own Axis partner, Italy. Only Britain had successfully resisted her, and Britain's power now seemed to be

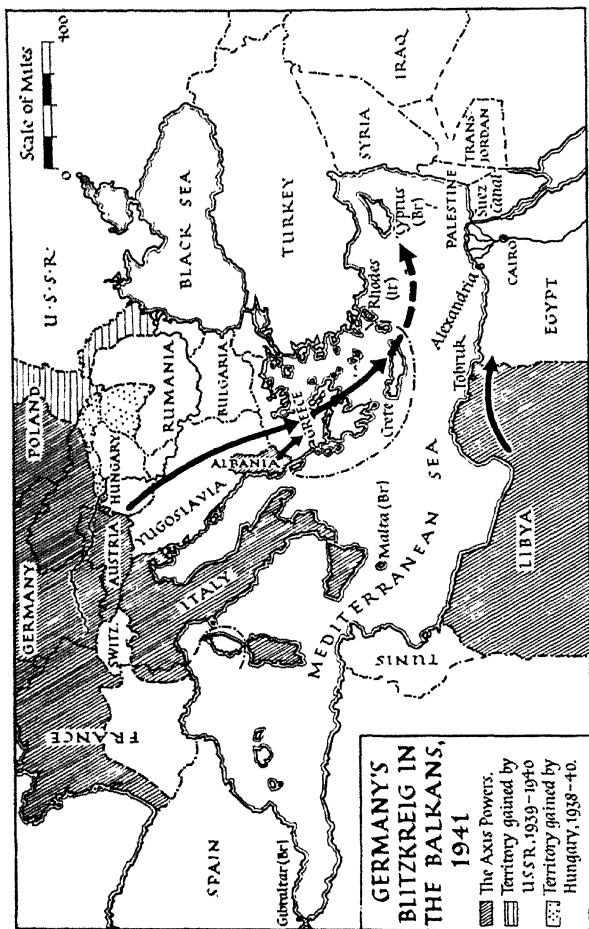
tottering. Why did Hitler at this stage have to risk all these gains, so amazingly won, in a huge gamble against Russia?

But history has shown again and again that nations in a mood for conquest are never satisfied. Some ravening demon drives them on. After so many triumphs, Hitler doubtless believed he could not lose. On June 22, 1941, without warning of any sort, without declaration of war and in violation of the Non-Aggression Pact of 1939, Germany began the invasion of Russia.

For the invasion Hitler used 160 army divisions, 70 armoured divisions and four-fifths of his air force. Rumanians joined his right wing in the south, Hungarians his centre, and Finns his left wing in the north. In all 9,000,000 fighting men—Germans, Rumanians, Hungarians, Finns, and Russians—joined battle on a 1000-mile front.

The frontier provinces—the part of Poland and the Baltic states—which the Russians had been preparing as a defensive buffer against such an invasion as this, were quickly overrun. But they served to ‘cushion’ the first fierce impact of Germany’s Blitz. The Red Army generals fought with a keen understanding of the German method of attack. Like the German generals, they, too, had been students of mechanised warfare, and they now refused to be terrorised and overwhelmed by the tactics which had lately beaten down Poland and France.

The battle was fast moving. Fronts lost themselves in the vast areas. The German tanks were often cut off from their supporting infantry. Losses to both sides must have been stupendous. But despite their losses the Germans



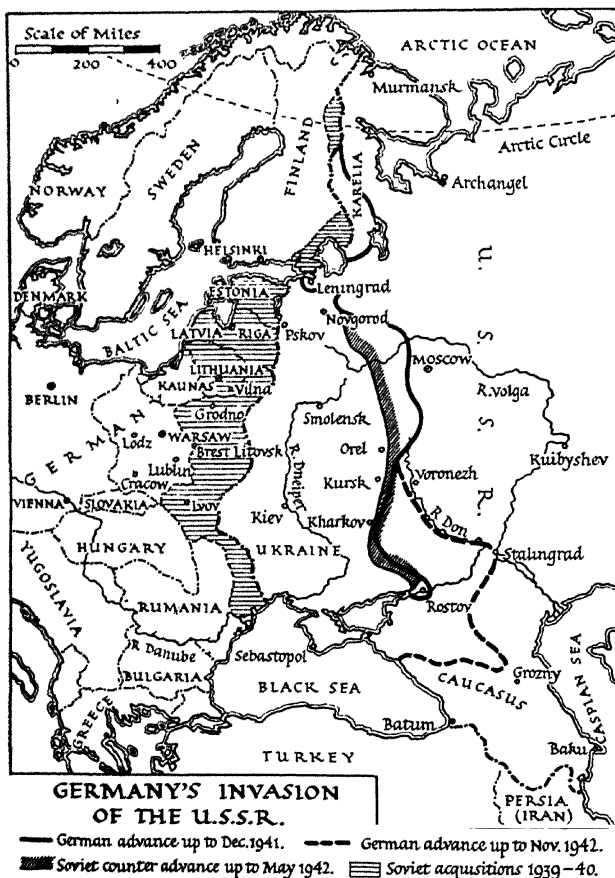
Early in 1941, before his invasion of Russia, Hitler 'cleaned up' North Africa and the Balkans, and tried to break British power in the Near East.

continued to roll forward. The Russians held every town and city till they had exacted for it the full price in German lives, and then they retired in good order, 'scorching' everything they left behind. Russian guerrillas raided, burned and killed deep in the German rear.

As winter approached, the Germans neared Leningrad, Moscow and Rostov. They had advanced 600 miles along their total front. The rich agricultural Ukraine and most of the rich industrial Don, albeit scarred and seared, had fallen into their hands. The Soviet Government moved back to Kuibyshev, but Stalin himself with his staff remained in Moscow.

On October 3, 1941, as the first snows of the Russian winter were beginning to fall, Hitler had declared, "The enemy is already broken and will never rise again." The Germans were in an exultant frame of mind, and believed that their war in Russia was finished.

But the farther the Russian armies were driven back, the more they seemed to draw upon new reserves of strength. At the end of 1941 the Germans found themselves strewn across the Russian plain, with their communications stretched to the limit, facing the prospect of winter—and it was a winter for which, in their optimism, they had made no proper preparations, a winter which, when it came, happened to be one of the severest Russian winters in living memory. Napoleon in 1812 had not faced a worse one. Goebbels in Germany made a hasty levy of clothing for the German army—'Goebbels' jumble-sale', as the British newspapers called it. More German soldiers during that winter in Russia died from exposure and frost-bite than from wounds received in battle. The Russian roads,

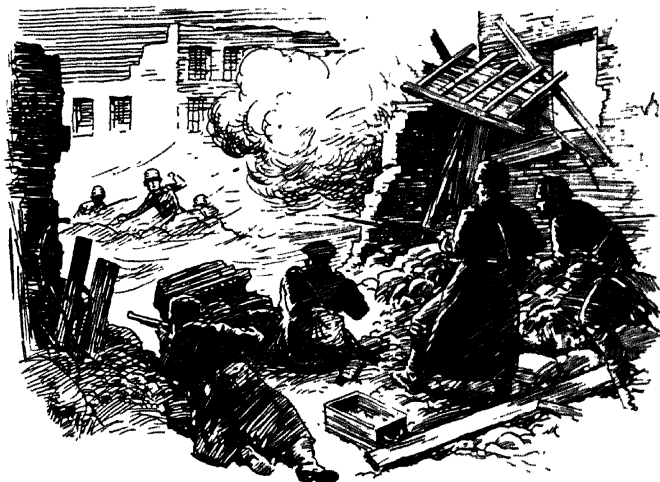


On June 22, 1941, Germany invaded Russia. German forces quickly overran the Soviet western territories and were stopped just short of Leningrad and Moscow. During 1942 they resumed their attack towards the Caucasus and were stopped at Stalingrad.

never very good at the best of times, disappeared under the snow and slush. For months the country was impassable to motor transport. The German air force was used up carrying supplies.

And then the Red Army, far from being broken never to rise again, started to counter-attack. It counter-attacked all through the grim winter months. Its progress was small—its one big gain was the recapture of Rostov—but it proved its extraordinary powers of recovery. The German cup of misery was filled to overflowing.

In the early summer of 1942, as soon as the spring thaw had cleared and the ground had hardened, the German



STALINGRAD

The artist's impression of an incident in the great battle at the end of 1942 which marked the limit of Germany's invasion of Russia.



army once more took the offensive. The war in Russia, it seemed, was going to become a mighty ding-dong battle in which the Germans advanced during the summer and the Russians recovered ground during the winter. But in 1942 the German army's offensive was beginning to lack something of its old driving-power.

The main direction of the offensive was now towards southern Russia and the great oil-fields of the Caucasus. By the middle of September, 1942, the German Sixth Army reached the River Volga, and the city of Stalingrad was in its direct line of assault. Other German forces were pushing their way towards Grozny.

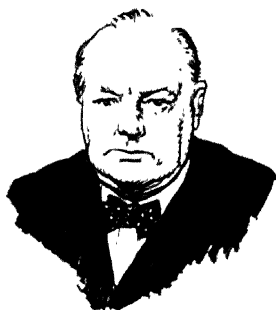
But the Germans never took either Stalingrad or Grozny. They had reached their farthest point in Russia.

#### THE BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC

Across the broad Atlantic Ocean and along the sea-lanes of the world another battle was now at its height—a battle less spectacular and bloody than that in Russia, but in its own way as vital.

Immense stores of war supplies were reaching Britain by sea from the British Dominions and India, and in particular from the United States. During 1941 President Roosevelt had been gradually urging the American people to abandon their isolationism and send ships and planes and tanks to the democracies in distress. "Give us the tools," Churchill had pleaded, "and we will finish the job." In March, 1941, the American Congress passed the so-called Lend-Lease Act, which permitted American war supplies to be shipped 'to the government of any country whose defence the President deems vital to the defence of the United States',

and, so that the old tangle of the Allied debts of the last war should not happen again, these supplies were afterwards to be paid for 'in kind or property'. The growing Anglo-American co-operation was sealed at Roosevelt's and Churchill's first meeting 'somewhere at sea' in August, 1941, when they signed the Atlantic Charter\* setting forth 'the common principles . . . on which they base their hopes for a better future for the world'.



WINSTON CHURCHILL, British  
Prime Minister, 1941-1945.

Germany repeated her old submarine campaign of the First World War. But this time she had much more in her favour. She possessed submarine bases from Norway to France, and it is believed she used ports in neutral Spain. Her submarines had sailing ranges which could take them to South America and South Africa. She sent out supply ships to refuel and repair them. She had aerial patrols 'spotting' for them, and often bombing on their own account.

The convoy, as before, was the regular method of defence. New types of escort ships, like the corvette, were built. The United States provided fifty destroyers. But Britain's shipping losses were enormous. On the average 200,000 tons were sunk a month, and the figure sometimes rose to 500,000 tons, the equivalent of 100 merchantmen. The country could not have sustained such losses for long.

German surface raiders also were at sea. The so-called

\* Appendix II.

German 'pocket-battleships' had been originally designed as commerce raiders. In May, 1941, the *Bismarck*—Germany's newest and most powerful battleship—was 'loose' in the North Atlantic. She sank the British battle-cruiser *Hood*, at that time the largest fighting ship in the world. The entire British Home Fleet and as many planes of Coastal

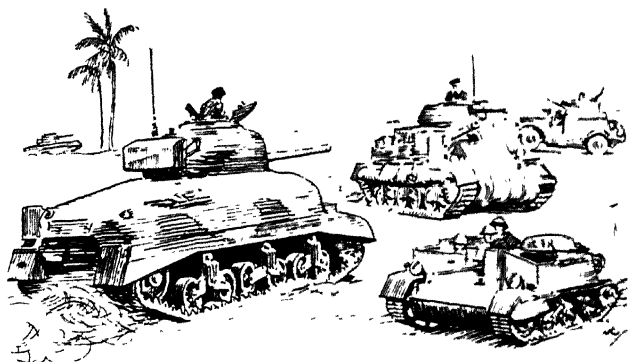


The convoy system, developed in 1917 during the First World War as a defence against German submarines, was used in the Second World War. Merchantmen sailed in formation with escort ships like destroyers or corvettes and often under aerial protection as well.

Command as could be spared were sent to hunt her down. She was eventually brought to action 550 miles off Land's End and sunk by gunfire and torpedo.

At the same time aid was now being sent to Russia, and much of it went by the very dangerous Arctic convoy route, through almost frozen seas, to Murmansk and Archangel. Then, far to the south of Russia, a new supply route was

found. In August, 1941, Russian and British forces occupied Persia, seized the Persian oil-fields, and opened up the long road across Persia from the Persian Gulf to the Caspian Sea. In the Second World War, as in the First, Russia was very isolated from her allies.



BRITISH TANKS IN THE DESERT

Several types of tanks and motorised vehicles were developed during the fighting in North Africa.

#### THE MEDITERRANEAN

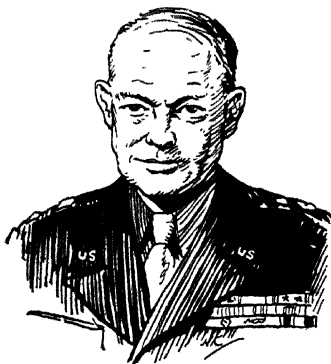
Beside the Battle of the Atlantic and the Battle of Russia, events elsewhere might well seem rather unimportant. In the Mediterranean both sides made gains and suffered losses. German aircraft were busy attacking British shipping. British naval squadrons bombarded Genoa and badly battered an Italian fleet in a big naval battle off Crete.

In November, 1941, the British land forces opened their second offensive in Libya. It was a harder-fought operation than that of a year before when Wavell had won his brilliant

victory. The British Eighth Army defeated the German Africa Corps, now under the command of a new general, Rommel. But once more the offensive failed of complete success. In January, 1942, the Germans counter-attacked, and the Eighth Army was driven right back to positions at El Alamein, a scant fifty miles from Alexandria.

#### AMERICA AND JAPAN GO TO WAR

On the other side of the world Japan and China were still engaged in the war, 'the China incident', which, as we mentioned in Chapter 15\*, had begun as far back as 1937. Japanese forces were still pressing forward into the interior of China, but Chiang Kai-shek had retired to a new capital at Chungking, farther up the Yangtze River, and from there continued to defy his country's invaders.



DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER (General of the Army), Commander-in-Chief Allied Forces in North Africa 1942-1943 and of Allied Forces in Western Europe 1944-1945.

The war in Europe and Hitler's unbroken run of victories seemed to offer Japan a golden opportunity for bringing her war in China to a successful end, and even for launching out into new directions. Japan, like Germany, was in a conquering mood, and the moment was most encouraging. The fall of France in 1940 put the French possessions in the Far East at her mercy, and Japanese forces began to creep into French

\* Pages 180-182.

Indo-China and from there into Siam. It looked as if the whole of the Far East might conveniently drop into Japanese hands, and the only country with power to interfere with Japan's designs was the United States.

So Japan threw down her challenge to the United States. On December 7, 1941, at the very moment that Japanese delegates were in Washington discussing the possibilities of making peace in China, Japanese aircraft made a surprise attack on the American naval base at Pearl Harbour in the Hawaiian Islands. Eight American battleships and several smaller vessels were sunk or severely damaged. Scores of American airplanes were destroyed on the ground. In all, the Americans suffered some 4,500 casualties. The United States and Britain immediately declared war on Japan.

#### THE JAPANESE BLITZKRIEG IN THE PACIFIC

Pearl Harbour was the beginning of Japan's own Blitzkrieg, and an astonishing Blitzkrieg it was. Following a plan, evidently long prepared, Japanese forces began to seize islands and territories in the Pacific. Each success was a step to the next. Guam, Wake, Hong Kong, Siam, Malaya, Singapore, Burma, the Philippines, Sumatra, Borneo, Java and most of New Guinea fell one after another. By April, 1942, Japan was threatening India and Australia. Her submarines were roving the South Pacific and the Indian Ocean. At one time a Japanese landing on the island of Madagascar off the African coast seemed likely. Japanese armies might even be joining hands with the Germans and Italians advancing across Russia and Egypt.

This was the darkest hour of the war. The American navy, stunned and crippled by its losses at Pearl Harbour,

was largely withdrawn to its home bases in California. A few days after Pearl Harbour Japanese aircraft had bombed and sunk the great British battleships, the *Repulse* and *Prince of Wales*, in the Gulf of Siam. At Singapore, 100,000 British, Indians and Australians, had been taken prisoner. Britain had also been sustaining heavy naval losses in the Mediterranean. Italian divers fixed 'limpet bombs' to British battleships in Alexandria Harbour, which, though they did not sink, were put out of action for months. Malta was being mercilessly bombed. Rommel and the German Africa Corps, as we have described\*, were before El Alamein, and looked as if they would soon drive for Cairo and all Egypt. Worse than all, the Battle of the Atlantic at this time was going through one of its grimmest phases.

## CHAPTER 20

### THE FINAL PART OF THE WAR, 1942-1945

#### THE UNITED NATIONS

THE Second World War lasted nearly six years. The story of the first three years we have now just told. It seemed a muddled sort of war. Fronts started up and battles were fought in several parts of the world at once. There was no apparent connection in the welter of events

\* Page 240.

except, on the Axis side, a general expanding offensive everywhere and, on the Allied side, a grim determination to hold on.

We have described how serious was the situation in the early months of 1942. But at this darkest hour fortune began to turn. Britain, Russia and the United States were building up their tremendous strength, and, despite their huge losses and reverses, they were at last overhauling and passing the advantage with which the Axis started the war. Their supplies were beginning to flow; their armies were mustered, trained and tried by experience; their chiefs were holding conferences and evolving long-term plans. From 1942 onwards to their victory in 1945 they were on the offensive, and the world watched the unfolding of what must surely be the grandest strategic plan in the history of warfare.

The first sign of the change for the better was the forming of 'the United Nations'. The war was become a world war. Several South and Central American republics had followed the lead of the United States and declared war on Germany and Japan. American and British troops had occupied the Danish territories of Iceland and Greenland. Churchill had spent the Christmas of 1941 in America, just after Pearl Harbour. He had held several meetings with President Roosevelt, and among the matters that had been discussed was the welding into a single solid alliance of all the various countries then in the war against the Axis. By a pact signed in Washington on New Year's Day, 1942, twenty-six United Nations agreed to devote all their resources of men and materials to their common struggle.



In 1942 the line-up of the Axis and the United Nations was thus as follows :—

<i>The Axis</i>	<i>The United Nations</i>	
Germany	The United States of	Greece
Italy	America	Guatemala
Japan	Great Britain and Northern	Haiti
	Ireland	Honduras
<i>Associated with</i>	Russia (the U.S.S.R.)	India
<i>the Axis</i>	China	Luxembourg
	Australia	The Netherlands
Finland	Belgium	New Zealand
Hungary	Canada	Nicaragua
Rumania	Costa Rica	Norway
Bulgaria	Cuba	Panama
Thailand	Czechoslovakia	Poland
(Siam)	The Dominican Republic	Salvador
		South Africa
		Yugoslavia
<i>Associated with the United Nations</i>		
	Abyssinia	
	Denmark, Iceland and Greenland	
	Egypt	
	Iraq	
	Palestine	
	Persia	
	Syria	

Subsequently, between 1942 and 1945, the following joined the United Nations: Mexico, the Philippines, Abyssinia, Iraq, Brazil, Bolivia, Iran (Persia), Columbia, Liberia, France, Ecuador, Peru, Chile, Paraguay, Venezuela, Uruguay, Turkey, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Lebanon. At the end of the war, 51 nations had joined.

#### THE CORAL SEA AND MIDWAY; EL ALAMEIN, NORTH AFRICA AND STALINGRAD

The first round of the new offensive war of the United Nations was fought by the American navy in the Pacific.

In May, 1942, American aircraft-carriers and battleships met and defeated a Japanese fleet in the Battle of the Coral Sea. The second round followed a month later, and again American aircraft-carriers and battleships met and defeated a Japanese fleet in the Battle of Midway. In August American marines landed at Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands, and in September a combined American and Australian force began a desperately difficult mountain and jungle campaign against the Japanese in New Guinea.

And then the United Nations launched three great offensives in the European area. First, on October 24, 1942, before El Alamein, the British Eighth Army under General Montgomery opened an attack on Rommel and his Africa Corps, and in a few weeks utterly routed him. Second, on November 7, American and British convoys—some 850 warships and merchantmen—appeared off Morocco and Algeria and landed an army of 150,000 men with all their stores and equipment. Third, on November 21, the Red Army counter-attacked on either side of Stalingrad.

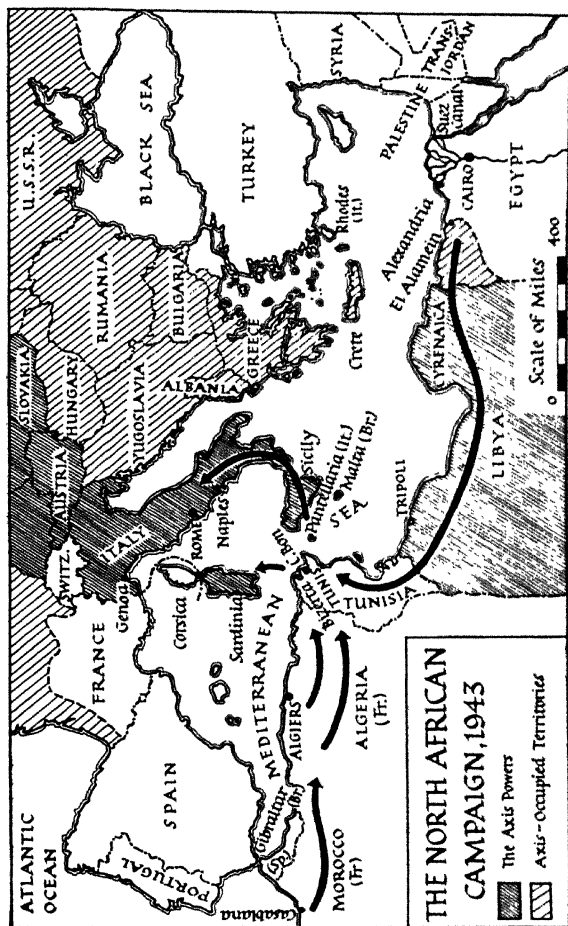
The Battle of Stalingrad was one of those terrible, desperate battles into which both sides throw all they have. It reminds us of nothing so much as the Battle of Verdun in the First World War, where the stakes were equally high and as bitterly contested—with the difference that, this time, the battle ended in a decision. It lasted more than two months, mostly across the snowy, wind-swept steppe country where the Volga and the Don approach to within fifty miles of one another. On January 31, 1943, 135,000 men with their Field-Marshal and fifteen generals—all that survived of the 300,000 men of the once proud

German Sixth Army—surrendered to the Russians. Of the city of Stalingrad itself at the end of the battle hardly a house was left standing, but it had never wholly fallen to the enemy.

The whole of the southern part of the German Front in Russia was broken. Italian and Hungarian contingents, fighting beside the Germans, were routed and scattered. The German forces, which had been marching deep into the Caucasus, in an attempt to capture the oil towns of Batum and Baku, hurriedly retired. Everywhere the Russians surged forward. In the far north, Leningrad, under siege and almost surrounded since 1941, was relieved. By March, 1943, the Russians had retaken Kursk and Rostov and had in places made advances of 300 miles. The cost to Hitler of the Russian winter campaign of 1942-1943 is said to have been 2,000,000 men missing and dead.

The Germans never recovered from the disaster. They tried to disguise their losses. In July, 1943, it looked as if they would start one of their regular summer offensives, as they had done on the Russian Front in 1941 and 1942, and a violent tank attack was delivered against the positions the Russians had taken round Kursk. But the attack had none of the old power behind it. The Russians were now quite capable of facing and defeating the German tank divisions. The days of the invincible Blitz were over. The Battle of Kursk was Hitler's last offensive effort in Russia.

Thereafter the Russians resumed their forward drive. Report after report came through of cities liberated, rivers crossed and triumphant gun salutes in Moscow in celebration of each victory. At the end of 1943 the Red Army was back at Smolensk, Kiev and Sebastopol.



The British Eighth Army striking westward from El Alamein in October 1942 and the Anglo-American forces striking eastward from Algeria in November 1942 met in Tunisia and thence proceeded to the invasion of Sicily and Italy.

El Alamein began like the two other winter-time sallies which the British forces had made from Egypt. But as the battle developed it was clear that it had been planned on a far more determined scale and was a part only of a great campaign intended to liberate the whole of the Mediterranean and strike at 'the soft under-belly' of the Axis. While Montgomery and the Eighth Army chased and bombed Rommel across Libya, the Anglo-American army, landed in Morocco and Algeria under the supreme command of the American General Eisenhower, began to advance eastwards. In eighty days the Eighth Army covered 1350 miles. At the end of March, 1943, the two armies joined hands in Tunisia and pushed forward together to Tunis and Bizerta. Axis forces made a last half-hearted stand in the small point of land called Cape Bon, where 250,000 of them, hopelessly trapped, at last laid down their arms.

The whole North African coast was freed from the enemy. The relief to Allied shipping was immediate. Merchantmen, which had been compelled to take the long route round the Cape, could now sail the length of the Mediterranean. British fleets which had been fighting and blockading Italy could be sent to aid the Battle of the Atlantic or to join the war in the Pacific. "The Battle of Alamein," said Churchill afterwards, "was the turning-point in British military fortunes during the world war. Up to Alamein we survived. After Alamein we conquered."

#### THE COLLAPSE OF ITALY

Almost immediately preparations went forward for crossing the narrow waist of the Mediterranean at Malta

and invading Sicily. The little Italian island of Pantelleria was bombed into submission. In the early hours of July 10, 1943, Anglo-American landings were carried out, in rough weather but with surprising ease, along the southern coasts of Sicily. Two thousand warships and merchantmen took part in the operation. The Italians seemed to have no further heart for fighting; the towns and villages of Sicily received the invaders as liberators. But German units resisted strongly. The Eighth Army landed on the 'toe' of Italy on September 3, and thence followed the Allied struggle northwards up the length of the Italian peninsula.

It was not to be expected that Mussolini would survive the break-up of his empire and the defeat of his armies. Fascism had lived by the sword, and it now died by the sword. On July 19, 1943, Mussolini met Hitler and made a last appeal for reinforcements so that he might still hold Rome and maintain himself in power. Hitler refused; he had no reinforcements to spare. On the same day Allied planes bombed Rome. On July 24 the Fascist Grand Council met, voted against its Duce, and compelled him to resign. To all intents and purposes Fascism had collapsed. Marshal Badoglio was charged by the King of Italy to rule the country. In September the Marshal signed an armistice surrendering 'unconditionally' to the Allies, and in October his Government declared war on Germany.

Germans remaining in Italy continued to fight stubbornly, and the latter part of the Allied Italian campaign in 1944 was disappointing, slow and difficult. The weather was bad, and for months 'sunny Italy' became a land of rain, snow, mud and flooded rivers. General Alexander

now commanded an Allied force of many nationalities—British from the homeland, Americans, New Zealanders, South Africans, Canadians, Indians, French, Poles, Czechs, Yugoslavs, and latterly some Italians—and he led them north through Anzio, Cassino, Rome, Bologna, Ravenna and towards the frontiers of Austria and Germany. Italian partisan patriot forces meanwhile were active in northern Italy. An important Yugoslav partisan force was fighting in the hilly country in Serbia and Bosnia under the Yugoslav Marshal Tito, and was now receiving extensive supplies from Italy by Allied planes.

Mussolini was assassinated by Italian partisans in Milan in April, 1945.

#### THE WAR AT SEA

In 1943 the Battle of the Atlantic began to take a turn for the better. Probably some 400 to 500 German submarines were then in commission, of which 100 were operating at a time in the Atlantic. Often they roamed the sea in 'wolf packs'. By July the Allied navies were gaining the upper hand. More German submarines were being sunk than built. Convoys of Allied merchant ships were escorted by ever larger numbers of destroyers and corvettes, many of them built in Canada and manned by Canadian seamen, and later by a new class of ships called by the old name of 'frigates'. Meanwhile the air umbrella was widened until the whole Atlantic 'gap' was regularly patrolled by planes spotting and hunting their quarries. Arctic convoys fought their way to northern Russian ports in spite of everything that German submarines and bombing planes could inflict. On September 2, 1943, the great German

battleship *Tirpitz*, which was lying in wait for these very convoys, was torpedoed by British midget submarines as she lay at anchor in the shelter of a Norwegian fjord. England's sea war of 1943 is a long story of patience, resourcefulness, infinite courage and of gradually extending success.

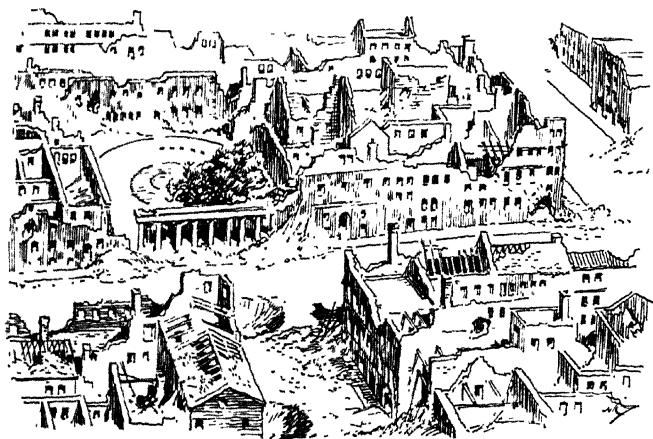
#### THE WAR IN THE AIR

Meanwhile the war in the air was developing also. In 1940, in the Blitz on London, German planes dropped 450 tons of bombs in an all-night raid; in 1943 the R.A.F. dropped 2500 tons of bombs in a raid of half an hour. In 1940 Coventry was 'Coventrated'; in 1943 Hamburg was 'Hamburged'. Allied bombers ranged over all Germany, and from bases in North Africa and afterwards in Italy they raided the Danube countries and the Balkans. New methods of marking targets were perfected. Aerial navigation was becoming an exact science. A raid was no longer a haphazard adventure, but an operation elaborately worked out at every stage, with targets carefully stated in advance and selected according to a comprehensive strategic plan.

In May, 1943, Lancasters blew up the Möhne and Eder dams and temporarily shattered the water-supply system of the industrial area of the Ruhr. During the summer raids were concentrated on the factories of the Ruhr. As winter approached and the nights lengthened, the R.A.F. stretched out to Berlin, the German capital, which became, in fact, the worst-bombed city of the war. Bomber Command announced that it was well on the way to knocking out the forty most vital centres of the enemy's war production.



United States bombers were designed for raiding by day and often engaged in running combats with German fighters sent to intercept them. Thus R.A.F. bombers by night and United States bombers by day—‘round-the-clock’ bombing, as it was called—gave the enemy no rest. There



DEVASTATED BERLIN

Berlin was probably the worst bombed of any European city in the Second World War. An estimated area of nearly 6,500 acres was destroyed, more than ten times that in London.

was not an hour in which German cities were secure from the long venging arm of Allied air power. Credit must surely be given to these persistent operations for the curious weakness which Axis forces began to show in Russia and North Africa during 1943.

By contrast, Germany attempted little in the air in 1943. Göring's *Luftwaffe* was already in decline. People in Eng-

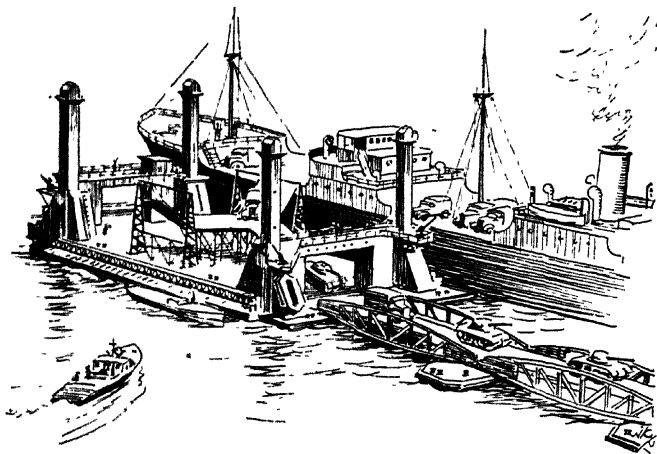
land had almost forgotten those grim days in 1940 when, looking upwards at a passing plane, they had always expected to see Nazi markings on it. German raids were now made by fits and starts on outlying targets, often by single planes. The newspapers called them 'hit-and-run raids', or 'scalded-cat raids', or just 'nuisance raids'. Of military usefulness they had none.

#### TOTAL WAR

All these victories by land, sea and air had only been made possible by the efforts of whole peoples. In Chapter 2 we spoke of the First World War as a 'total war', absorbing every man and woman and all a country's industry and wealth. The Second World War built on the experience of the First and was even more expensive of money and material. Controls, restrictions and hardships bore heavily on the people at home.

War had become a great machine. It was fought to plan, and planning had to look far ahead. The production, let us say, of a new tank or plane took time. It involved discussion, experiment, calculations and drawings, the re-tooling of factories, and then the training of men who were to use the finished weapon in battle. Afterwards, perhaps all sorts of readjustments had to be made as the result of battle experience. Modern weapons were extraordinarily complicated. A tank had about 7000 parts made from 40,000 separate pieces of material. Teams of designers and technical experts—'back-room boys'—in office and laboratory pored over their instruments and slide-rules, working against time, creating these intricate monsters. From the moment that an idea was born to the moment that the new

weapon began to roll off the assembly line might be two years. Churchill ordered the famous 'Mulberry' prefabricated harbours, used in the invasion of Normandy, in May, 1942, and they went into action in June, 1944. The Second World War saw many great inventions, which long afterwards will still be affecting our ways of life—radar,



MULBERRY HARBOUR

To enable heavy stores and equipment to be landed on the invasion beaches in Normandy in 1944, the Allies used 'prefabricated' harbours. The drawing shows a ship unloading at one of the piers.

penicillin, jet propulsion and the release of atomic energy—and all were the result of long, intensive collaboration, often between hundreds of workers.

The science of war developed so fast that weapons were constantly out-dated. A new design might be 'old' before it was off the drawing-board. But, once a design

was fixed, modern mass-production methods enabled it to be turned out in any quantity. At the height of her productive effort in 1944 the United States was producing one ship a day and one aeroplane every five minutes.

All this explains how it was that the aggressor power, whose war production at first was well advanced, had such overwhelming advantages. In 1939 and 1940 Hitler's war machine was a reality. England's existed largely on paper, and America's was not even on paper. There is a time-lag in modern war, and in 1940 the time-lag nearly gave Hitler his victory. By 1943 Britain, the United States and Russia had at last out-classed Hitler at his own game.

When the weapons were made and the men were trained to use them, even then it was not the end of the story. Never was there a war which depended so much on organisation and co-operation among the different branches of the fighting services and among the Allies. The joint Allied victories by land, sea and air were not only feats of arms, but feats of staff work. Every gun and every shell used in the Eighth Army's opening barrage at El Alamein was brought by sea round the Cape of Good Hope up the Red Sea to Egypt. The North African landing with its 850 ships, the Sicilian landing with its 2000 ships, the Normandy landing in 1944 with its 4000 ships, all went off like clockwork. Days, weeks, months of anxious, secret planning with maps and time-tables went into these operations.

The bigger decisions were made at conferences of Allied leaders. Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin and their staffs held several famous meetings. Roosevelt and Churchill spoke almost daily to one another on the trans-Atlantic telephone. The problem of unified command, which caused so much

difficulty in the First World War, was settled early. The American General Eisenhower, perhaps as great a statesman as he was a soldier, commanded all the American and British forces in the European theatre. The American General MacArthur commanded in the south-western Pacific area. All sorts of boards and co-ordinating committees sprang up in London and Washington. Many of us used to criticise the enormous staffs engaged in office jobs and the piles of reports and forms which they produced. But without organisation, for all its many inefficiencies and irritations, the war could never have been fought. The Second World War was a total war, a scientific war, a mechanised war, an Allies' war, and also a 'desk war'.

#### THE FORTRESS OF EUROPE

For Germany the war was becoming a sad and cruel experience. With what a shock of horror must her people have come to the realisation at last, after all their victories, and after all their Führer's promises and prophecies, that their country might be defeated. The Allied air offensive never ceased. Thousands were killed by bombs in Berlin, Hamburg, Cologne, Essen, Dresden, and other crowded German cities. And all the restrictions and shortages of total war were harder for Germany, a blockaded country. The fall of Italy was a shattering blow.

Meanwhile Hitler prepared what was left of his empire for the great Allied invasion he knew must come. 'The Fortress of Europe' he called it. His engineers began to construct the Atlantic Wall. The old West Wall was put into readiness. More and more was everything concentrated for war. The occupied territories were stripped

to feed, clothe and arm the Master Race. Foreign workers and prisoners of war—12,000,000 of them, it is said—toiled in Germany. But even so there were never men enough to tend the German war machine. Never again, said Hitler, should there be another 1918, and he assured his stricken people that new 'secret weapons' would avenge the Allied aerial terror and re-establish German might.

#### THE FAR EAST

By comparison with the European and Mediterranean fronts the war in the Pacific during 1943 and 1944 took a secondary place. While the main Allied effort was being devoted to knocking Italy out of the war and pressing in on Hitler's 'Fortress of Europe', Japan was to be held and harried, her outlying conquests were to be attacked, such aid as was possible was to be sent to China, but no more was to be done than this.

Anxious and despairing appeals were coming from China at this time. China had already been fighting for twelve years—her war with Japan had really begun in 1931. Like Russia, she always seemed to have plenty of space to retreat into, and her allies took the comfortable view that, however heavily she was punished, she could always retreat a little farther and continue to hold out somehow. But it was becoming clear in 1943 that China could retreat no more, and might even be forced to sue for peace. The Burma Road had been cut when Burma was lost, and supplies to China could only be sent by air over the great mountain 'Hump' above Assam.

During 1943 Japan made a determined effort to finish her

war in China. A dangerous Japanese offensive developed up the River Yangtze against Chiang Kai-shek's capital at Chungking. There was fierce fighting in 'the rice-bowl' round Changsha. The Japanese captured air-ports in China which Americans had been constructing in preparation for raids on Japan. The old quarrel between Chiang Kai-shek's Government and the Chinese Communists started up again. Nevertheless, China did hold out somehow; she did not ask for peace. But we know now how very near she came to the edge of collapse.

The Burma front was active. British and Indian forces, under Brigadier Wingate, specially trained for jungle fighting, pushed in behind the Japanese lines as far as the Shan country and played havoc with Japanese communications. Chinese and American forces reached Myitkyina



PACIFIC WARFARE

The Americans fought an amphibious campaign for the capture of islands in the Pacific, each island being a stepping-stone to the next. Naval, air and land forces co-operated closely in the operations.

in Northern Burma. In 1944 the newly formed British Fourteenth Army—the 'Forgotten Army', as it was sometimes called, because its exploits were so little reported in the newspapers—took the offensive and crossed the Chindwin River. Little was it realised at the time that the Fourteenth Army was making the first step in an enterprise which was afterwards to grow into the reconquest of Burma.



GEORGE C. MARSHALL, General of the Army, Chief of Staff of the U. S. Army, 1939-1945, and later Secretary of State, 1947-1949.

American forces, assisted by Australians and New Zealanders, attacked Japanese-held islands in the south-western Pacific. The good work begun in New Guinea and at Guadalcanal was carried a stage farther. Most of New Guinea was liberated. The Japanese time and time again attempted to relieve their forces beleaguered there, and such attempts often developed into naval actions. From Guadalcanal followed landings along the length of the Solomon Islands up to Rabaul. A series of bold thrusts took the Gilbert, Marshall and Mariana Islands. By the summer of 1944 the Allies possessed a chain of bases for their assault on the Philippines and thence on Formosa and Japan herself. On October 20, 1944 the Americans landed on Leyte in the Philippines. A couple of days later, in the Battle of Leyte Gulf, American naval forces defeated a Japanese attempt to oppose the landing in the greatest naval action of the war. The Japanese navy never re-



covered from the heavy losses inflicted on it in this battle.

The war in the Pacific was fought over immense distances. From tip to tip of the Solomon Islands measured 1000 miles—twice the length of great Britain. From Guam in the Mariana Islands to Hawaii measured 4000 miles—nearly twice the length of the Mediterranean. Battleships, submarines and bombers had all to be designed for long-range operations. Where possible, wounded men were evacuated from the battle-area by plane and sometimes flown thousands of miles for treatment. The climate was tropical; the islands were mostly dense clumps of jungle. For sheer hardship and discomfort campaigning conditions were about as bad as they could possibly be. The Japanese was a brave but barbarous enemy who, in defeat, usually refused capture and died fighting at his post.

The war in the Pacific depended on the closest co-operation between all forces by sea, air and land. The Japanese in the days of their own Blitz had attacked 'frontally' and taken one island after another by direct assault. But they had fought ill-prepared defenders in ill-prepared positions. The American Blitz-in-reverse had to be a much more calculated process. Usually the Americans tried to land some miles away from the position they actually wished to take, built an airfield, and then reduced the position by bombing Japanese supply convoys attempting to reach it. Such operations took time, but saved life. Rabaul, for example, was captured in this way, and so was most of New Guinea. American tactics afterwards in the Philippines and in the Ryukyu Islands off Japan were very much the same.



## THE GREAT OCEAN

The American Pacific campaign was fought over half the area of the world. Immense distances called for brilliant staff work and organisation.

### NORMANDY TO ARNHEM

For Britain, America and the Western Allies 1944 was the year of the invasion of northern Europe. It was the beginning of the end. No secret was made of it. Preparations were open—so open, in fact, that it seemed as if Germany was to be purposely overawed by them. General



VISCOUNT MONTGOMERY (Field-Marshal), Commander of the British Eighth Army, 1942-1943, and Commander of the 21st Army Group in France, 1944-1945.

Wisenhower, General Montgomery, Air Chief Marshal Tedder and Admiral Ramsay were appointed to the supreme commands. Early in the year the southern and south-eastern counties of England were closed to civilian traffic. To people who lived in the closed area the rumble of tanks and lorries in the streets, the roar of passing planes overhead and muffled spurts of firing from artillery

ranges became familiar sounds at all times of the day and night. Everyone talked invasion—in spite of the security silence. The only thing that was not known was exactly when and where the invasion would take place.

The first stage of the invasion was a prolonged assault by the British and American bombers. When D-Day arrived complete aerial supremacy over the Channel and over northern France had been achieved, and the German positions and defences throughout had been reconnoitred and photographed from the air. German air-fields within 100 miles of the sea, some eighty railway junctions and all the bridges, with only one or two exceptions, over the Rivers Seine and Loire had been battered into uselessness. Mosquitoes, armed with rockets, went on regular 'locomotive-busting' forays.

The actual landing had to wait for the right conjunction of wind and tide, but was made at last in roughish weather on June 6 along the coast of Normandy. Over 4000 ships



took part, together with many hundreds of smaller craft. Thousands of men were dropped by parachute. Surprise was complete. We know now that the Germans believed the landing would take place near Calais, and, in any event, expected the invaders to have chosen better weather. It was, in fact, the stormiest June in forty years. In the first twenty-four hours all the beaches had been overrun, and the old Norman city of Bayeux captured. Battered railways and bridges prevented German reserves arriving faster than the invaders' bridgehead could be built up. Some German divisions took as much as ten days to cover fifty miles. The enormous masses of equipment the invading armies needed were put ashore partly from specially designed landing-craft and partly in two great prefabricated 'Mulberry' harbours which were towed into position. The British forces now made for Caen, which they reached but failed to take. The American forces made for Cherbourg, which fell to them on June 26.

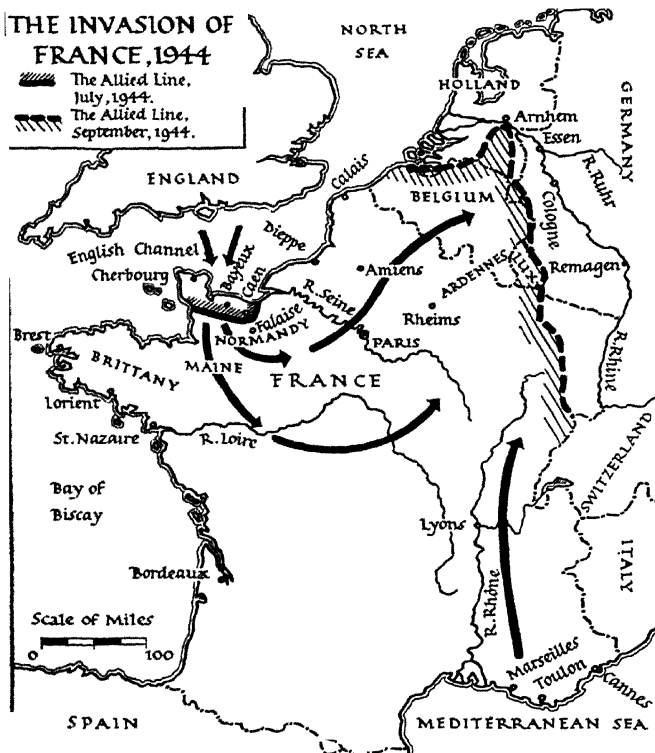
During July the Germans began to collect the bulk of their armoured forces and attacked the British before Caen. Montgomery's plan was to 'contain' them there while the Americans, specially equipped and trained for mobility, broke out in a southward direction and were soon irresistibly careering in a vast fleet of tanks and armoured cars across Brittany and Maine. The Americans then swung round, and began to form an enveloping pocket at Falaise. After Falaise, the whole Allied line advanced across the Seine.

In August a new invasion force, this time mainly of Americans and French, made a landing along the south coast of France between Toulon and Cannes and, against

very slight German resistance, began to push up the valley of the Rhône. The Germans were losing their grip on France. They made an effort to cling to the big sea-ports—Brest, Lorient, St. Nazaire, La Rochelle—for, despite the 'Mulberry' harbours and Cherbourg, the Allies needed

### THE INVASION OF FRANCE, 1944

-  The Allied Line, July, 1944.
-  The Allied Line, September, 1944.



Anglo-American landings took place on the Normandy beaches on June 6, 1944. In four months' fighting the Germans were driven back to their original frontiers.

every port they could get for the supply and feeding of the huge armies they had now deployed. The German retirement from France became a veritable rout. French patriot forces rose in the German rear and harried the German communications. On August 19, 1944, French patriot forces were in insurrection in Paris, and a few days later a French armoured column entered and completed the liberation of the city. Optimistic newspaper men had some reason indeed for predicting an end to the war by Christmas, 1944.

There was one lively interlude at this time. A few days after D-Day the Germans, from launching sites in the Pas de Calais, began to send over their V.1's or flying bombs, 'doodle-bugs', as they were soon nicknamed in England. These were apparently one of Hitler's much-advertised 'secret weapons' with which he vainly hoped to stem the Allied successes. They were small pilotless aeroplanes, and were jet-propelled. For about two months they gave the London area a decidedly uncomfortable time, and they might have been a serious menace but for the great balloon barrage, fighter and anti-aircraft defence that were prepared for them in Kent and Sussex. Later the Germans sent over their V.2's or rocket bombs—a much more terrible weapon which, happily, was not fully developed before the war ended.

In 1944, while the invasion battles were being fought in the West, the Russians were also winning victories. They rolled forward along their entire front. They advanced over 'scorched' country whose railways had been largely destroyed. Yet their extraordinary mobility surprised both their Allies and their enemies. No doubt they

made excellent use of the thousands of Lend-Lease lorries and trucks sent them from America. The Germans behaved like a beaten army, though they were generally able to retire in good order without leaving too many prisoners behind them. Hitler talked of directing the war 'by intuition', but he did not repeat his obstinate folly at Stalingrad.

Once more the daily papers carried bulletins of Russian cities liberated, rivers crossed and triumphant gun salutes and firework displays in Moscow—Odessa, Sebastopol, Vilna, Grodno, Pskov, Lublin, Lvov, Brest-Litovsk. Russian forces crossed the borders of Rumania, Finland, the Baltic States, Yugoslavia, Poland and East Prussia. Rumania capitulated in August; Bulgaria and Finland capitulated in September.

The collapse of Italy, the rout of Germany in France and Russia, and now the falling away of Hitler's lesser allies, all pointed to the approaching end; and the end, once in sight, it was believed would come suddenly. Conditions in Germany were going from bad to worse. Many expected a revolution like that of 1918 to break out. Perhaps the German people feared their Gestapo more than they feared the Allies; perhaps ten years of Nazification had dulled their powers of initiative and independent thought; perhaps at the last moment they conjured up hidden reserves of stubbornness. There was no German revolution in 1944 or in 1945.

A group of German generals plotted to remove Hitler, seize power in Berlin and appeal to the Allies for peace. On July 20, 1944, they concealed a time-bomb in an attaché case at Hitler's headquarters. It exploded and

killed several high-ranking officers. Hitler himself escaped —“ providentially ”, he said -- with slight burns to one of his hands. The plot collapsed and a field-marshal and five generals—“ a small clique of ambitious, irresponsible and criminally foolish officers ”, as Hitler called them — were



ARNHEM

In September 1944 British airborne forces carried out a heroic but unsuccessful operation at Arnhem in an attempt to secure a crossing of the Rhine and turn the entire German position.

afterwards tried and hanged. The whole incident was as near to revolution as Germany was fated this time to come.

The Allies, west, south and east, were swarming towards Germany's frontiers. The West Wall—the old West Wall built before the war—was to be Hitler's main line against the British and American forces. But the West Wall was weak at its northern end near Arnhem in Holland, just as the



Maginot Line had been weak at its northern end, and Montgomery hoped he might be able to turn the whole German defence by an attack at that point. Late in September, 1944, a great operation was carried out by British airborne troops at Arnhem with the intention of seizing the Rhine and Maas crossings there. The operation failed; the Germans were able to hold their positions. The British lost more than half their Airborne Division.

Arnhem was a heroic gamble to end the war quickly. Its real meaning was that another winter and more hard months of fighting had still to go to the ultimate defeat of Hitler's Germany. The headlong Allied advance through France had overreached itself. Time was needed to consolidate gains, organise communications, repair railways, roads and bridges, clear damaged towns, and build up dumps of stores. But the inevitable finale was only postponed.

#### THE COLLAPSE OF GERMANY

In January, 1943, shortly after the Allied landing in North Africa, Churchill and Roosevelt had held one of their meetings at Casablanca in Morocco and had decided that the war would be fought until 'the unconditional surrender' of the three Axis Powers. Stalin was not at the meeting, but agreed to the declaration. Never again would Germany's propaganda be allowed to invent the myth that her army had not been fairly beaten and that she had been tricked into a disgraceful peace; never again would she be allowed to turn and twist the terms of an armistice or treaty so as to evade the consequences of her defeat. This time Germany must admit defeat unmistakably; this time there must be no terms to turn and twist. And Italy and

Japan must take the same bitter medicine. In September, 1943, as we described above, Italy had surrendered unconditionally to the Allies.

The year 1944 ended with a sudden local German counter-attack. In mid-December, at a time of poor flying weather, when the Allied air forces could give no help, Rundstedt, the German commander in the West, launched a tank attack against the American lines in the Ardennes, an attack evidently intended to disrupt the preparations the Allies had been making for resuming their advance in the spring. It was rather like the German tank attack against the Russians round Kursk in July, 1943. Like that attack, it looked dangerous for some days, but there was none of the old power behind it. It was the last German offensive in France. When the weather cleared and the Allied air forces could operate again, American and British armies closed upon Rundstedt's 'bulge' and forced him back to his starting-point.

On January 16, 1945, the Russians opened a great offensive from their positions on the River Vistula, and in the first day advanced 40 miles on an 80-mile front. Within a week they were deep in industrial Poland and East Prussia. Warsaw, Lodz, Crakow and Tilsit fell to them in quick succession. On January 21 they crossed the borders of Silesia. As in the West, the Germans tried to delay the Russian advance by clinging to the big sea-ports, and they held out for some weeks in Danzig and Königsberg. But Danzig and Königsberg by then had been left many miles behind the actual front. On April 13 Vienna fell, and a few days later the Russians were fighting in the suburbs of Berlin.

Meanwhile, in February and March, American, British, Canadian and French Armies were also on the move. The German West Wall was quickly passed, with far fewer casualties than had been expected. The American Ninth Army took Cologne. The American First Army made good its crossing of the Rhine at Remagen over a bridge which the retiring Germans, by an extraordinary oversight, had left intact. The British attacked north of the Ruhr, and the Canadians through Holland.

The Rhine was the last barrier. By the end of March it had been crossed everywhere. Army after Army poured eastwards into central Germany. Advance parties of Americans and Russians met on the Elbe on April 26. Only one event cast a shadow of sadness. President Roosevelt died suddenly on April 12. It was an unhappy destiny that struck him down at this great moment of the fulfilment of all his hopes and plans. He was succeeded by Vice-President Harry Truman.

Meanwhile news was coming from Italy that the Eighth Army was once more on the offensive there. Field-Marshal Alexander received the unconditional surrender of the German forces in Italy on April 29, and two days afterwards the city of Berlin, bombed, bombarded and burning, fell to the Russians. Goebbels and his family committed suicide. Hitler and a wife, whom he is supposed to have married only a few days before, committed suicide. Their bodies were never found.

The final unconditional surrender of Germany was now largely a matter of form. The Allies were mainly interested in making it convincing beyond question. For a moment Himmler proclaimed himself the successor of

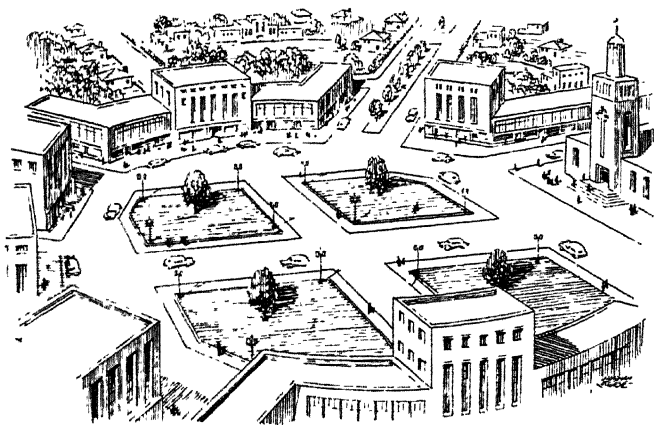
Hitler, tried to open parleys with the British and Americans, was captured and took his own life. On May 4 Field-Marshal Montgomery received the unconditional surrender of the German armies in north-western Germany. The final act of surrender was signed at Rheims, in the presence of General Eisenhower, on May 7, 1945.

#### THE COLLAPSE OF JAPAN

In the third week in July, 1945, Churchill, Truman and Stalin met for one of the great Allied conferences at Potsdam to decide plans for the treatment of Germany, and from there issued a final summons to Japan, 'unconditional surrender or utter destruction'.

Japan was nearing the inevitable end. By the New Year, 1945, American forces under General MacArthur were already clearing the Philippines. Manila was liberated in February. The Japanese mainland meanwhile was now being bombed, sometimes by more than 1000 planes at a time. Islands near Japan were being 'softened' for landing operations. Iwojima, in the Volcano Islands, was captured in February and March, and Okinawa, in the Ryukyu Islands, was captured between April and June, both after the fiercest fighting. The Americans immediately repaired air-fields on the islands for the more intensive bombing of Japan.

Japanese warships attempted to relieve the islands, but were hopelessly outnumbered and outclassed by the huge fleets which the United States and Britain were now able to concentrate in the Pacific waters. The newest and heaviest Japanese battleship, *Yamato*, of 45,000 tons, was sunk by aerial attack, and during July what was left of the Japanese



THE FUTURE THAT MIGHT BE

A planned city, one of many that peace in the world would make possible.

navy was raided and destroyed as it tried to shelter at its bases. American and British ships were cruising at will within full sight of the Japanese coasts.

Meanwhile the British Fourteenth Army was steadily driving the Japanese out of Burma. Mandalay was liberated in April, and Rangoon in May. Preparations were going forward for a descent on Malaya, Singapore and the East Indies.

Events now moved rapidly. On August 6 the first atomic bomb was dropped by an American plane on the Japanese naval base of Hiroshima. On August 8 Russia declared war on Japan, and the Russian armies in Siberia advanced into Manchuria. On August 9 a second atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. The Japanese Government announced that it would accept the Allied terms.

On September 2, 1945, a Japanese delegation signed the instrument of unconditional surrender, in the presence of General MacArthur and other high Allied officers, aboard the American battleship *Missouri* in Tokyo Bay.

The Second World War was over.

## APPENDICES

### I. THE FOURTEEN POINTS

From President Wilson's address to United States Congress on January 8th, 1918.

1. Open covenants of peace, openly arrived at, after which there shall be no private international understandings of any kind, but diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view.

2. Absolute freedom of navigation upon the seas, outside territorial waters, alike in peace and in war, except as the seas may be closed in whole or in part by international action for the enforcement of international covenants.

3. The removal, so far as possible, of all economic barriers and the establishment of an equality of trade conditions among all the nations consenting to the peace and associating themselves for its maintenance.

4. Adequate guarantees given and taken that national armaments will be reduced to the lowest point consistent with domestic safety.

5. A free, open-minded and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, based upon a strict observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is to be determined.

6. The evacuation of all Russian territory and such settlement of all questions affecting Russia as will secure the best and freest co-operation of the other nations of the world in obtaining for her an unhampered and unembarrassed

opportunity for the independent determination of her own political development and national policy and assure her of a sincere welcome into the society of free nations under institutions of her own choosing; and, more than a welcome, assistance also of every kind that she may need and may herself desire. The treatment accorded Russia by her sister nations in the months to come will be the acid test of their goodwill, of their comprehension of her needs as distinguished from their own interests, and of their intelligent and unselfish sympathy.

7. Belgium, the whole world will agree, must be evacuated and restored without any attempt to limit the sovereignty which she enjoys in common with all other free nations. No other single act will serve as this will serve to restore confidence among the nations in the laws which they have themselves set and determined for the government of their relations with one another. Without this healing act the whole structure and validity of international law is forever impaired.

8. All French territory should be freed and the invaded portions restored, and the wrong done to France by Prussia in 1871 in the matter of Alsace-Lorraine, which has unsettled the peace of the world for nearly fifty years, should be righted, in order that peace may once more be made in the interest of all.

9. A readjustment of the frontiers of Italy should be effected along clearly recognizable lines of nationality.

10. The peoples of Austria-Hungary, whose place among the nations we wish to see safeguarded and assured, should be accorded the freest opportunity of autonomous development.



11. Rumania, Serbia and Montenegro should be evacuated; occupied territories restored; Serbia accorded free and secure access to the sea; and the relations of the several Balkan states to one another determined by friendly counsel along historically established lines of allegiance and nationality; and international guarantees of the political and economic independence and territorial integrity of the several Balkan states should be entered into.

12. The Turkish portions of the present Ottoman Empire should be assured a secure sovereignty, but other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development, and the Dardanelles should be permanently opened as a free passage to the ships and commerce of all nations under international guarantees.

13. An independent Polish state should be erected which should include the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations, which should be assured a free and secure access to the sea, and whose political and economic independence and territorial integrity should be guaranteed by international covenant.

14. A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike.

## II. THE ATLANTIC CHARTER

The statement issued by Mr. Winston Churchill, Prime Minister of Great Britain, and President Roosevelt of the United States of America on August 14th, 1941.

The President of the United States and the Prime Minister Mr. Churchill, representing His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, have met at sea.

They have been accompanied by officials of their two Governments, including high-ranking officers of their military, naval and air services.

The whole problem of the supply of munitions of war, as provided by the Lease-Lend Act, for the armed forces of the United States and for those countries actively engaged in resisting aggression, has been further examined.

Lord Beaverbrook, the Minister of Supply of the British Government, has joined in these conferences. He is going to proceed to Washington to discuss further details with appropriate officials of the United States Government. These conferences will also cover the supply problems of the Soviet Union.

The President and the Prime Minister have had several conferences. They have considered the dangers to world civilization arising from the policies of military domination by conquest upon which the Hitlerite Government of Germany and other Governments associated therewith have embarked, and have made clear the steps which their countries are respectively taking for their safety in the face of these dangers.

They have agreed upon the following declaration :

The President of the United States and the Prime Minister Mr. Churchill, representing His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, being met together, deem it right to make known certain common principles in the national policies of their respective countries on which they base their hopes for a better future for the world.

First : Their countries seek no aggrandizement, territorial or otherwise;

Second : They desire to see no territorial changes that do not accord with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned;

Third : They respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live; and they wish to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them;

Fourth : They will endeavour, with due respect for their existing obligations, to further the enjoyment by all states, great or small, victor or vanquished, of access on equal terms, to the trade and to the raw materials of the world which are needed for their economic prosperity;

Fifth : They desire to bring about the fullest collaboration between all nations in the economic field, with the object of securing for all improved labour standards, economic adjustment and social security; -

Sixth : After the final destruction of the Nazi tyranny, they hope to see established a peace which will afford to all nations the means of dwelling in safety within their own boundaries, and which will afford assurance that all the men in all the lands may live out their lives in freedom from fear and want;

Seventh : Such a peace should enable all men to traverse the high seas and oceans without hindrance;

Eighth : They believe that all of the nations of the world, for realistic as well as spiritual reasons, must come to the abandonment of the use of force. Since no future peace can be maintained if land, sea or air armaments continue to

be employed by nations which threaten, or may threaten, aggression outside of their frontiers, they believe, pending the establishment of a wider and permanent system of general security, that the disarmament of such nations is essential. They will likewise aid and encourage all other practicable measures which will lighten for peace-loving peoples the crushing burden of armaments.